

Previous File

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POLITICAL AND SECRET DEPARTMENT.

12

3

P.

2696

1914.

2

Subject:

Persia

New Anglo Russian agreement

2

This File contains the following papers:—

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1915. P. 1500 2163 2526 3493 1916. 3656

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Memoranda.

If any papers are removed from this File, please inform the Political Registry.

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2490

4

Extract House of Commons Proceedings. - 4 Dec. 1917
(Oral Questions)

RUSSIA.

ANGLO-FRENCH-RUSSIAN AGREEMENT.

2. Mr. RICHARD LAMBERT asked the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Anglo-French-Russian Agreement of 21st February, 1917, is still held to be binding on the parties to it; and whether this country still affirms its intention to hand over Ispahan and Yezd, in Persia, to Russia, and to extend the British sphere of influence in Persia over the zone determined as neutral by the Agreement of 1907?

The MINISTER of BLOCKADE (Lord Robert Cecil): I know of no Agreement corresponding to that referred to by the hon. Member. As regards a possible revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907, I would refer the hon. Member to the reply returned to the question put by the hon. Member for North Somerset on the 3rd instant.

Sir J. D. REES: Does not the use of the expression "Hand over Ispahan and Zeyd" show a complete misapprehension as to what such agreements as these really are?

Lord R. CECIL: Yes, Sir; an entire misunderstanding.

Mr. OUTHWAITE: In any rearrangement that is made will the right hon. Gentleman seek to establish the independence of Persia?

Lord R. CECIL: The hon. Gentleman is no doubt aware of our obligations in that respect.

4 Dec



Indexed.

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5

Extract House of Commons proceedings - 3 Dec. 1917
(Oral Questions)

PERSIA (ANGLO-RUSSIAN
CONVENTION).

22. Mr. KING asked whether by any agreement or understanding arrived at during the War this country has expressed its intention, or taken power, to establish British influence over that part of Persia declared to be neutral in the agreement with Russia made in 1907?

Lord R. CECIL: No definite proposals have been made in the matter, although His Majesty's Government have signified to the Russian Government that a revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention in the sense indicated will be a matter for eventual discussion between the two Governments.



Register No.

2490

Put away with

2696

14

Minute Paper.

Secret Department.

Letter from Sir P. Cox

Dated 23 June

1917.

Rec. 16 June

	Date.	Initials.	SUBJECT.
To Under Secretary....	18 June	J.R.J.	<u>Prussia</u> The Anglo-Russian Convention, 1907 : suggested re-delimitation of Russian and "neutral" spheres in the Kerman- shah region.
Secretary of State...	19	Alt	
Committee.....	21	<u>RC</u>	
Under Secretary....			
Secretary of State...			

Copy to 70. - 28 June

FOR INFORMATION.

The present time is obviously inopportune for raising questions of this kind with Russia (or with Prussia). The late Russian Govt were prepared, as part of a general compact between the Entente Powers, to give up to us the whole of the "neutral" sphere in Prussia. The views of the present Russian Govt. are unknown to us, though we have been assured that "all idea of converting Northern Prussia into

Seen Pol. Com'ee.,
26 JUN 1917

Previous Papers:—

"into a Russian Province" has been abandoned.

The Russian Minister at Tehran volunteered the opinion in April last, while at Petrograd, that "delimitation of our respective spheres of influence ought to follow ethnographical & geographical lines"; but there appears to be some doubt as to what exactly he had in mind.

J.R.F. 18/6/17.

As regards the Bagdad - Kermanshah road (see 3rd paragraph of the Consul's letter), the present ~~be~~ southern boundary of the Russian sphere - which is a mere straight line ruled on the map - crosses the Kasr-i-Shirin - Kermanshah section of the road no less than 4 times.

J.R.F.

W.H.
C.M.
W. 270

①

H.B.M. Consulate, Kermanshah

Dated the 12th April 1917.

No. 1 .

Indexed.

2490

1917

Sir,

I have the honour to address you on the subject of the line delimiting the Russian and neutral spheres, as it affects Kermanshah and adjacent provinces.

There is no correspondence on record in this Consulate on this subject, and I therefore write in ignorance of the exact considerations which led to the adoption of the present line, or whether any modification of it has since been proposed. Its inconveniences however- apart from special disadvantages to ourselves- are so obvious that it may be supposed that the Kasri-Shirin-Ispahan line was only traced as a makeshift, pending the establishment of a line that would follow provincial boundaries.

Now that Baghdad has been occupied by our troops, I venture to think that this question should, if possible, be reconsidered, before the establishment of a new condition of things, that might make the reopening of the matter more difficult.

The existence of oil and coal deposits in the Kasra Shirin district will make this area of great importance in the future. There is again the fact that the Baghdad-Kermanshah road is the only natural gateway into Persia from Mesopotamia and will certainly form the alignment of a railway in future. It is therefore of the first importance that our influence in Kermanshah should be felt, especially with regard to such matters as the improvement of communications, telegraphs and Customs, as also in the management of the Persian border tribes.

The minimum ~~of~~ concession that would secure to us the advantages alluded to and also give recognition to the predominant influence we now possess in Luristan and Bakhtiari would be the alteration of the line to one following the boundary between the Kermanshah and Kurdistan provinces. Such a line would run from the Persian frontier on the west to the



tri-junction of the boundaries of the provinces named with Hamadan. It would thence follow the Kermanshah boundary to its junction with that of Luristan. This would leave the districts of Tusakhan, Nehavend, and Malayar (called together Selasa) on the Russian side. The Luristan boundary would then be followed to its junction with the Arabistan boundary, which province officially includes also the whole of the Bakhtiari country. It would of course be of advantage if the province of Araq, in which there is a considerable amount of British capital invested in the carpet industry, could also be conceded, but the above it, as has been said, the minimum that could reasonably be claimed in view of our newly acquired position at Baghdad. It is probable also that the principal carpet firms of Araq would transfer their establishments to the Kermanshah province if the latter were brought within the neutral commercial sphere. I do not follow the line further as I am not competent to express an opinion on the most desirable alignment further south.

I have in the forgoing presumed the continuance of a neutral sphere. If the neutral sphere is abolished it is desirable that the British sphere should extend to the line indicated above as a minimum. My personal opinion is however that it would be more advantageous to us to extend the neutral sphere as suggested than to extend the British sphere to include the neutral sphere as at present defined if these were alternatives. This conclusion is based on the practical certainty that our superior activity would soon gain for us commercial predominance in a sphere in which both powers had equal opportunities. Since however when the present spheres were determined, all Persian provinces conterminous with Russian territory were allotted to the exclusively Russian sphere, it may be hoped that the Russian Foreign Office would now agree to the same principle being applied in the case of the Persian provinces

lying to the west of our newly acquired possessions in Mesopotamia.

A copy of this despatch is being forwarded to the Chief Political Officer, I.E.F."D".

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

presumably R.L. Kennion

L

Lt. Col.

H.B.M. Consul for Kermanshah.

To

Sir, Charles Marling etc., etc.,

H.M. Minister, Tehran.

No. C 432
32/1

Chief Political Office,
Baghdad, 23rd April 1917.

Copy forwarded to:-

- (1) The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, Simla.
- ✓ (2) The *Political Secretary India Office* ~~Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs~~, S.W. London.
- (3) The Chief of the General Staff, I.E.F."D", G.H.Q.

for information.

M. Rose

Chief Political Officer.

M

T.M.N.

Register No.

Put away with 2696
74
Secret Department.

Minute Paper.

2479

Letter from W.

Dated 15 June 1917.
Rec.

	Date.	Initials.	SUBJECT.
To Under Secretary....	16 June	JRS	<u>Prusia</u> The S. Prussian Rifles : impending request from Prussian Govt. for substitution of neutral for British Officers
Secretary of State...	18	MS	
* Committee.....	19	<u>MS</u>	
Under Secretary....			
Secretary of State...			

Copy to India - 28 June

FOR INFORMATION.

Seen Pol. Com'ee.,
28 JUN 1917

MS
MS
MS
MS

Previous Papers :—

2348 ~~2348~~

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2479
1917

Mr 2438

Indexed.

PERSIA

POLITICAL

Decypher. Sir C. Marling (Teheran)
June 14th.1917.

D. 8.20 p.m. June 14th.1917.

R. 8 a.m. June 15th.1917.

No. 206. (D).

My telegram No. 197.

Persian Government is already refusing to recognise increase of Cossack brigade under the agreement of August last and in a private conversation Minister of War a very moderate man did not conceal from me that the Government would approach us with proposals to substitute neutrals for British officers in Southern Persia Rifles.

Addressed to Foreign Office. Sent to India and Petrograd.

RECEIVED IN
15 JUN 1917
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

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and should be returned to the Foreign Office when done with unless
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Copy

PERSIA

POLITICAL.

Decypher of telegram from Sir C. Marling (Teheran).

June 7th. 1917.

D. 10.45 a.m.

June 7th. 1917.

R. 3.25 p.m.

No. 197. (D).

Your telegram No. 780 to Petrograd April 23rd.

Press is already urging that Russian Government should be invited to abrogate 1907 convention and the agreement of August last and it is probable that Persian Government will make some movement in that direction.

Addressed to Foreign Office, sent to India and Petrograd.

Register No.

2348

Put away with 2696
14
Secret Department.

Minute Paper.

Letter from S.O.

Dated 12 June 1917.
Rec.

	Date.	Initials.	SUBJECT.
To Under Secretary....	13 June	JY	<u>Russia</u> Press campaign in favour of abrogation of Anglo-Russian Agreement, 1907, and Anglo-Russo-Russian Agreement, 1916.
Secretary of State...	14	P. W. H.	
Committee.....	15	<u>as</u>	
Under Secretary....			
Secretary of State...			

Copy to India - 28 June

FOR INFORMATION.

C.H.
C.H.
U.S.
ESD

Seen Pol. Com'ee.
20 " " 1917

Previous Papers :—

1689

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Indexed.

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1917

3091/16
1689/17
a.R. Com
1907

PERSIA

POLITICAL.

Decypher of telegram from Sir C.Marling (Teheran).

June 7th.1917.

D. 10.45 a.m.
R. 3.25 p.m.

June 7th.1917.

No.197. (D).

(1689/17)

Your telegram No.780 to Petrograd April 23rd.

Press is already urging that Russian Government
should be invited to abrogate 1907 convention and the
agreement of August last and it is probable that Persian
Government will make some movement in that direction.

Addressed to Foreign Office, sent to India and
Petrograd.

RECEIVED IN
12 JUN 1917
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

Register No.
1772
[1727]

Put away with 2696
Secret Department. 14

Letter from F.O.
Tel. " Viceroy

Dated 28
27, 30
Rec. 30 Apr 1917.

Formally acknowledged

	Date.	Initials.	SUBJECT.
To			
Under Secretary.....	30 Apr.	J.R.S.	<u>Russia</u>
Secretary of State.....	1 May	Alt	Proposal of Russian Ministry, Tehran, to negotiate
Committee			a new Anglo-Russian Agreement: views
Under Secretary.....			of G. of I.
Secretary of State.....			

Copy to India (1 letter to F.O. & all F.O. papers) 3 May
F.O. ("Viceroy's letter") - 2 May
" ("Tel" to India)

FOR USE BY DEPARTMENTS ONLY.

Off. to F.O. forwarding with comments.

Letter to Foreign Office. 2 May 1917.

3 May. Tel " to India.

Previous Papers:—

1689
1570

Minute

Both Sir G. Buchanan & Sir C. Marling are convinced that Mr. Etter meant no harm by talking about "ethnographical & geographical lines." It always appeared to the Dept. that the F.O. apprehensions on this point were rather far-fetched. But, as the G. of I. say, the position is obscure at present, & it seems best to wait till Sir C. Marling has ascertained more clearly what Mr. Etter does mean, before offering further criticism.

J.R.f. 30/4/17

Book.

2 May 1917.

S/Lt. F.O.

Sir,

In continuation of my letter of the 19th April 1917, No. P. 1570, regarding the proposal to negotiate a new Anglo-Russian Agreement in regard to Persia, I am directed by the S. of S. for I. to invite reference to the Viceroy's telegram of the 29th April^x, to express his general concurrence in the G. of I.'s views on the subject. Mr. Secretary Chamberlain will defer more detailed criticism pending the receipt of the further explanations which Sir C. Marling has been instructed to furnish after the ~~his~~ return of his Russian colleague to Tehran.

(Sd.) J. E. SHUCKSBURGH.

x Copy ^{enclosed} ~~communicated~~ to

F.O.,

1917

Copy to India
3 May

Put away with 2696
14

DRAFT TELEGRAM. X

P1774/17

SECRETARY OF STATE

Despatched + hs 3/5/1917.

TO

VICEROY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

(Retamilla)

Foreign Secut. Your telegram
of 28th April. Persia.

Please repeat to Minister
Tehran.

copy to F.O. 14 May.

Send
J.E.J.
3/5/17

Indexed.

P
1772

1917

Telegram from Viceroy, Foreign Dept.

X

Dated 28th April 1917.

Received 29th 10 a.m.

7.0. (19)
45
1570/17
1145/15
1689/17

Secret. Your telegram of the 18th instant. Persia. Purport of Russian Minister Tehran 's suggestion regarding delimitation of spheres is so obscure that we find it impossible to advise usefully. Although for the reasons stated in our telegram of the 23 March 1915 we should welcome abandonment by Russia of the idea of converting North Persia into a Russian Province we should strongly deprecate any readjustment of spheres which would give Russia access through Bakhtiari country to the Gulf and still more put Oil Fields within their sphere. Surely it would be better to postpone all negotiations in regard to Persia until a really stable Government has ~~been~~ established itself in Russia.

Copy to Pte Dec.

* i.e. that Russian retirement from N. Persia at our instance will (1) inspire confidence in the Moslem world ; and (2) save us from the serious additional military & civil obligations involved in the partition of Persia.



1772

Put away with

2696

14

RUSSIA

POLITICAL

Decypher. Sir G. Buchanan. (Petrograd). April 26th, 1917.

D. 9.32.p.m. April 26th, 1917.

R. 8.0.a.m. April 27th, 1917.

No. 582.

Your telegram 780. (1689)

In speaking of ethnographical and geographical line Russian Minister merely meant that these were considerations that must be taken into account in delimiting our respective spheres of influence and he was referring more especially to Ispahan district and to advisability of not splitting up tribes between two different spheres. He was speaking on the assumption that whole neutral zone would be included in our sphere. In saying, as reported in my telegram 495, that he and Sir C. Marling might study the whole question and submit their recommendations, my idea was that they should prepare the ground by furnishing us with a basis for future negotiations on which the two Governments could enter when opportune moment came.

Sent to Teheran.

Copy to India

3 Mar 1917



Put away with

2696

W/1689

(21)

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Indexed.

PERSIA

1727

POLITICAL 917

Decypher. Sir C. Marling (Teheran)
April 24th. 1917.

D. 5.35 p.m.
R. 12.40 p.m. April 24th. 1917.

No. 143.

*Copy to India
but not*

Your telegram No. 780 to Petrograd.

From my knowledge of Russian Minister I should think that his suggestion for delimitation on ethnological grounds was put forward with just the opposite aim; he has always been most scrupulous in recognizing Bakhtiari as a British interest.

Sent to Petrograd.

Copy to India
3 May

RECEIVED IN
27 APR 1917
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

Confidential.

Put away with

2696

Immediate
and
Confidential.

Indexed.

P
1689
1917

1570

14

(W. / 80911 / 1917.)

Reference :—Letter ^{to} from Foreign Office : _____

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents
his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for India,
and is directed by the Secretary of State to transmit the
accompanying copies of a telegram , as marked in the

margin.

Foreign Office,

April 25, 1917.

Copy to India
26 April .

RECEIVED IN
24 APR 1917
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

Copy to India
put by J.F.
25/4/17

(Similar letter sent to _____)

W/S
7. with
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P.
1689

(80911).

PEPSIA.

POLITICAL.

Cypher telegram to Sir C. Marling (Teheran).

Foreign Office, April 23rd, 1917. 3 p.m.

No. 123.

.....

My telegram No. 780 to Petrograd (of April 23rd.
 Russian desire to revise Persian portion of Anglo-
 Russian Agreement).

Please endeavour to obtain from your Russian
 colleague, on latter's return to Teheran, some
 indication as to what is meant by delimitation on
 ethnological and geographical grounds.

Confidential.

It is very desirable that we should in no way
 commit ourselves while the political situation in
 Russia remains so uncertain.

Repeated to Petrograd No. 781.

Copy to India
 26 apr

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P
1689
1917

(80911).

RUSSIA.

Copy to India

26 Apr.

POLITICAL.

Cypher telegram to Sir G. Buchanan (Petrograd).

Foreign Office, April 23rd, 1917.

No. 780.

.....

Your telegram No. 495 (of April 9th. Anglo
Russian Agreement respecting Persia).

Reference to delimitation on ethnographical and
geographical lines may indicate an intention on part of
Russian Government to embrace within their sphere whole
country covered by Bakhtiari which would bring them
down to Dizful on the Karun, and thus secure a Russian
outlet to the Gulf.

In any case you will be careful not to commit
His Majesty's Government to negotiations while the
political outlook in Russia remains so uncertain.

Repeated to Teheran No. 122.

RECEIVED IN
* 24 APR 1917 *
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

Minutes

we may concur ^(without hesitation) ~~entirely~~ in the two steps ^{which} ~~proposed~~ by the F.O. (last paragraph of their letter) propose to take at once. With regard to the larger questions raised in the letter, it seems desirable to consult the S. of I. by telegraph.

As regards the neutral sphere, the language of the Agreement of 22nd March ~~1915~~ 1915 is quite clear:— "Le Gouvernement Impérial confirme son consentement à ce que la zone neutre en prise soit incluse dans la sphère d'influence anglaise." The view of the F.O. that this undertaking is binding on Russia, whether or not she recedes from her own claims in respect of Constantinople & the Straits, is very satisfactory; and if ~~independent~~ ^{are able} H.M.'s Govt. ~~will find~~ ^{are able} it possible to maintain them it, no question of a Russian "outlet" in the Persian Gulf can arise. It is in fact not very clear what the F.O. are driving at in the 3rd paragraph of their letter. The extension of the Russian sphere to Dzigfel — undesirable as it ~~will~~ be — ~~will~~

not give the Russians an "outlet" in the
Gulf. Their only access to the latter will be
through Arabistan, where our influence will
continue to be paramount. ~~imperfect~~ The
possession of special and ~~high~~ exclusive interests
in the Persian Gulf has, of course, been a cardinal
article of British policy for many years past, &
has been formally announced (by Lord Salisbury in
1903 & by Sir E. Grey in 1907) and admitted by the
Russian Govt, quite irrespective of anything in
the agreement of 1915.

J.R. 18/4/17

I doubt if there is much that the G. of I.
can say at the present stage, but they ought perhaps
to be told what is going on.

At

18/4

Draft Paper.

Department.

Bo 12
Immediate

Off. F.O.

19 April 1917.

Sir,

With reference to your letter of the 17th Ap. 1917, No. W. 73697, regarding the ^{suggestion recently} proposal made by the Russian Minister at Tehran to H. M.'s Ambassador at Petrograd that steps should now be taken to negotiate a new Anglo-Russian Agreement in regard to Persia, I am directed by the S. of S. for I. to inform you that he concurs in the proposal of the S. of S. for F.A.

(1) to instruct Sir G. Buchanan not to commit H. M.'s Govt in any way in the matter; and (2) to request Sir C. Marling to ascertain from M. de Riter, on the latter's return to Tehran, the precise significance of his formula respecting

Copy to India
19 Apr.

specting the delimitation of the
British & Russian spheres of
influence on "ethnographical &
"geographical lines."

Mr. Secretary Chambelain is
consulting the G. of I. by telegraph
on the general questions raised
in your letter.

(Sd.) J. E. SHUCKBURGH.

DRAFT TELEGRAM.

SECRETARY OF STATE

TO

VICEROY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

(Retamilla)

Despatched

18/4/1917

Foreign Secret. Persia. Following
from H. M.'s Ambassador Petrograd
9th April begins Russian Minister
at Tehran has suggested to me
present moment very favourable for
negotiating new agreement about
Persia & very desirable to conclude
agreement before end of war. Sympathies
^{Russian} of Provisional Govt. entirely on side
of maintaining Persian independence
and idea of converting N. Persia into
Russian province now abandoned. Delimitation of our respective spheres
of influence ought to follow ethno-
graphical & geographical lines ends
marking will be ^{reported} ~~understood~~ to as-
certain from Elter on return to
Tehran precise meaning of ^{formula in} last sen-
tence. Meanwhile Buchanan instructed
not

not to commit H.M.S. Govt. in any
way. F.O. fear Russia may
desire outlet in Gulf and that
suggested delimitation of spheres
may imply inclusion in Russian
Zone of whole country occupied by
Bakhtians in migration, i.e. dis-
tricts between Isfahan and Dizful.
If this is so F.O. wd. infinitely
prefer maintenance of neutral
sphere in present form. Please
telegraph your views.

Indexed.

In any further communication
on the subject, please quote

No. W.73697/17.

and address—
The Under-Secretary of State,
Foreign Office,
London.

1570

1917

FOREIGN OFFICE

April 17th, 1917.

Immediate, and Confidential

Sir:-

I am directed by Mr. Secretary Balfour to transmit to you, herewith, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Chamberlain, a copy of a telegram from His Majesty's Ambassador at Petrograd, reporting that the Russian Minister at Teheran has suggested, with the approval of his Government, that the two Ministers at Teheran should now prepare a draft of a new Agreement regarding Persia.

Mr. Balfour is strongly of opinion that the fact that Russia may intend voluntarily to renounce her claim to Constantinople and the Straits, in no way releases the Russian Government from their obligation to support the desiderata of the Allies as formulated in their agreement with the late Government of Russia, and it must be remembered that the revision of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 so as to recognise the present neutral sphere as a British sphere is distinctly mentioned in the memorandum of March 12th, 1915.

If it were merely the question of the delimitation of the Northern boundary of the neutral zone as a British zone, Mr. Balfour

would

The Under Secretary of State,
India Office.



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RUSSIA

POLITICAL

Decypher. Sir G. Buchanan (Petrograd)

April 9th. 1917.

Copy to India

Apr 19.

D. 9.20 p.m. April 9th. 1917.

R. 8 a.m. April 10th. 1917.

No. 495.

P
1570

1917

Russian Minister at Teheran called on me a few days ago and suggested that present was very favourable moment for negotiating a new agreement about Persia and that it was in his opinion very desirable that such an agreement should be concluded before the war was over. Sympathies of Provisional Government were entirely on the side of maintenance of Persian independence and all idea of converting Northern Persia into a Russian province had now been abandoned.

Delimitation of our respective spheres of influence ought to follow ethnographical and geographical lines,

I said that I personally agreed with him but that I did not know what view you would take of his suggestion.

If it was acted on I thought he and Sir C. Marling might study whole question and submit their recommendations to their respective Governments.

I would, if he wished, mention matter to Minister for Foreign Affairs and in the event of suggestion meeting with his approval I would submit it to you.

Russian Minister assented but observed that both he and Sir C. Marling would have to be furnished with general instructions as to lines on which negotiations were to be conducted. He expected to return to Teheran

in



in about a fortnight.

I accordingly repeated substance of our conversation to Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday. He expressed himself in entire accord with Russian Minister's suggestion and said that he thought it would be excellent thing if our two Ministers could draw up draft agreement for discussion between two Governments.

He would be glad if I would enquire your views. One matter which rather preoccupied him was attitude that enquiry should adopt towards any movement in Persia. Sent to Teheran.

Register No.

Put away with 2696
74

Minute Paper.

3656

Secret Department.

Letter from 70.

Dated 7
Rec. 8 Sep. 1916.

	Date.	Initials.	SUBJECT.
To Under Secretary....			<u>Persia.</u>
Secretary of State...			
Committee.....			
Under Secretary....			
Secretary of State...			

Copy to

Noted in Memo. catalogue as C. 154

FOR INFORMATION.

Out by for present
9/9

Previous Papers :—

2526
15

1/2526/15

In any further communication on this subject, please quote

No. W. 177265/1916
and address—

The Under-Secretary of State
Foreign Office,
London.

P
3656
1916

Confidential

The Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs presents
his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for India
and, by direction of the Secretary
of State, transmits herewith copy of the under-mentioned
paper.

Foreign Office,

September 7, 1916.

Reference to previous correspondence:

Letter to Foreign Office:
from

Description of Inclosure.

Name and Date.	Subject.
Foreign Office Memorandum	Revision of Anglo. Russian Convention of 1907.

(Similar letter sent to

RECEIVED IN
8 SEP 1916
POLITICAL DEPARTMENT

(W. 177265
1916.)
CONFIDENTIAL.

(10710.)

C. 154

2 spare copies
received

PERSIA.

3656

MEMORANDUM RESPECTING THE REVISION OF THE ANGLO-RUSSIAN
CONVENTION OF 1907.

PART 2 of the memorandum of the Political Department of the India Office sets forth so comprehensively the British desiderata in Persia that there is little comment to offer from the point of view of the Foreign Office, unless it be a fear that all these requirements can scarcely be regarded as any longer within the range of practical politics.

2526/5-

The genesis of the present discussion does not lie in any new suggestion by Russia that the two Powers should allocate afresh the whole of Persia into two spheres, to be assigned to one or other of them. On the contrary, it is to be found in an invitation made by the Russian Government to His Majesty's Government to enter into possession of practically the whole of the *neutral* sphere.

To accept this offer and in the same breath to ask for a considerable area of the present Russian sphere can scarcely be held likely to facilitate our negotiations.

It is accordingly submitted that the line of demarcation now advocated by the Government of India should be abandoned at the outset, and that, so far as the inclusion of territory in the new British sphere is concerned, our efforts should be concentrated on the towns of Ispahan and Yezd, or, in the last resort, on Yezd alone.

The great importance to British interests of recovering our position and freedom of action in Ispahan is emphasised in the India Office memorandum both as regards the Bakhtiari and our approach to the oil-wells and the Persian Gulf, and some notes to this effect which His Majesty's Minister at Tehran has just furnished on the subject are annexed hereto.

As a counterpoise to this cession on the part of Russia, an offer might be made to surrender to her the oil-bearing districts in the neighbourhood of Kermanshah, which at present belong, in a more or less undeveloped state, to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company.

That Russia attaches great price to these wells was clearly shown in the summer of 1914, when His Majesty's Government invested some 2,000,000*l.* in that oil company. His Majesty's Ambassador at Petrograd was severely reproached by the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs on the subject, and reported by telegraph that—

"M. Sazonof said that action taken by His Majesty's Government (in purchasing shares of Anglo-Persian Oil Company) had changed whole character of concession. He did not want oil. Russia had enough and to spare, and we were at liberty to develop all the oil areas in south marked on Blue Book map, but it was a different matter with those near Kermanshah. Russian public [? opinion] would never tolerate arrangement under which a company controlled by British Government could operate in Russian zone and virtually absorb whole of the neutral zone. He did not want to make difficulties, but he must ask us to state publicly that we would not avail ourselves of all the rights conferred on D'Arcy by the concession.

"I repeated all the arguments used in your above-mentioned telegrams, and insisted that nothing had been changed. His Excellency, however, adhered to what he had said, and, as his view of the matter is universally held here, he is not likely to give way.

"I would therefore venture to submit that it is advisable for us to offer Russia some satisfaction with regard to oil-wells in the north. We do not apparently intend to develop them for years to come, and there is such a large field open to us in south that it is worth company's while to make a little sacrifice to gain Russia's good-will.

"By article 9 of its concession Anglo-Persian Company is empowered to found subsidiary companies for the working of its concession, and Russian opposition would, I think, be disarmed were His Majesty's Government to undertake that when

time comes for developing oilfields near Kermanshah, or any others that may be discovered to the north of those marked on Blue Book map as reported oil areas, an Anglo-Russian colony, somewhat on lines of Anglo-German company in Mesopotamia, should be formed for their exploitation. No term need be fixed for opening up of these oilfields, but if they are ever to be developed company would, I believe, gain by working in co-operation with, rather than in opposition to, Russia. It is the political rather than the economic side of the question that is of importance in the eyes of the Russian Government, and such a spontaneous offer on our part might dispose them to adopt a more conciliatory attitude with regard to larger question of their general policy in Persia."

While the question of supply is primarily a matter for the Admiralty to decide, the desirability of finding adequate compensation for Russia necessarily falls on the Foreign Office.

It is suggested that this oilfield in the neighbourhood of Kermanshah might be more appropriately used as a lever regarding Ispahan or Yezd than, as was proposed by the India Office memorandum, p. 5, as a counterpoise to railway activity as far as, or even beyond, Meshed.

This latter point of railway construction might be dealt with in connection with the fresh alignment of the spheres in the Zulfikar triangle, especially in view of the probability that after the war the question of Russian finance will for a considerable time necessitate every possible economy.

The reference in point 5 of the Russian memorandum of the 22nd March to the desired priority of Russia's rights in the northern sphere "for financial and economic undertakings" is clearly aimed at the position in those regions of the Imperial Bank of Persia.

This company, incorporated in September 1889 upon the basis of a concession to Baron de Reuter, has for over twenty-five years been the State Bank with the monopoly of issuing notes. The concession is to be in force for sixty years, and empowers the bank to establish its head office ("siège social") at Tehran, and branches in other towns in Persia and abroad. The bank may also undertake on its own account, or on account of third parties, all sorts of business, financial, industrial, or commercial, on condition that none of these undertakings be contrary to the treaties, laws, usages, or religion of the country, and that previous notice thereof be given to the Persian Government. Certain additions to the concession were made on the 27th July, 1889, but these do not affect the right of the bank to establish branches in towns of Persia. According to the "Statesman's Year Book" for 1915, the bank has branches at Tabriz, Resht, Kazvin, Meshed, Ispahan, Yezd, Shiraz, Kerman, Hamadan, Seistan, Kermanshah, Bushire, Mohammerah, Ahwaz, and Sultanabad; and agencies at several other towns.

By the convention signed at St. Petersburg on the 31st August, 1907, England and Russia engage not to seek or to apply for concessions of a political or commercial nature, such as railways, banks, telegraphs, roads, transport, insurance, &c., within the sphere left to the other of these two countries, nor to oppose, either directly or indirectly, demands for such concessions supported by the other of the two countries within its particular sphere. By article 3 of this convention it is provided that all existing concessions in the two spheres are maintained.

On the other hand, the Russian company (Banque d'Escompte), though an offshoot of the Russian Ministry of Finance, has never been a successful undertaking, and is now in very low water. Last year the two banks came to an arrangement, at the instance of the Russian Bank, regarding a minting contract for the Persian Government. The Russian Bank is, however, exceedingly jealous of the position and good standing of the Imperial Bank, and loses no opportunity of endeavouring to thwart the latter's successful business operations.

The Imperial Bank, with its head office at Tehran, and with nine branches (out of fifteen) in the present Russian sphere, would have every reason to protest with justice against any limitation in the Russian sphere of its activities as the State Bank.

The Russians have no similar institutions in either the present British or present neutral sphere. If, then, His Majesty's Government decide eventually in any way to meet the Russian request and to limit the Imperial Bank's activities to the remainder of Persia—a course which it is submitted could not be viewed without considerable alarm regarding the prosperity of one of the soundest British interests in the Middle East—such cession could be used as a most valuable lever with regard to the inclusion of Ispahan in the new British sphere.

It would, however, hardly be possible to take such a course, unless His Majesty's Government were prepared to pay to the Imperial Bank of Persia an indemnity for the loss not only of their branches but even of the removal of their head office from the capital of the country! Such an indemnity would be difficult even to compute.

31 Aug. 1915

ANNEX.

Notes by Mr. Marling.

WHEN I was passing through Petrograd I saw M. Sazonof, who, in speaking on the subject of the disappearance of the neutral zone in Persia, insisted very firmly on the desire of Russia to obtain a modification of the present limits of the Russian sphere, so as to include the Ispahan district as well as the town. He intimated that this extension was required so as to protect Russian trade in the Russian sphere from the competition of British merchants, and hinted that if we desired a *quid pro quo* we might take Yezd. He also wished the extreme eastern end of the present limits to the Russian sphere to be brought a little southward for military reasons, which "he could not explain, as he did not understand them."

M. Sazonof was quite vague as to the area of the Ispahan districts, but at the Russian Legation here I have heard that Kumisheh, some 45 miles away on the Shiraz road, would be included; I have no other indication as to the remainder of the area desired, but the mention of Kumisheh makes it look as though a very considerable tract may be contemplated.

The justification put forward for this claim seems to me to be totally inadequate, and I urge that, instead of Russia being allowed to push further south, Ispahan and a certain area north should, in our interests—and even partly in Russian interests also—be included in our sphere.

The reasons for our claiming Ispahan are almost entirely bound up with the position of the Bakhtiari, whose territory, if we accede to the Russian desideratum, would be cut in two unequal parts, the smaller and northern part being in the Russian zone, and the larger part, now in the neutral zone, falling to us.

Although by no means the most numerous tribe in Persia, the Bakhtiari, in spite of family squabbles, constitute probably the most important tribal unit in the Empire, and they have been taught the value of unity by the considerable rôle which they in late years, thanks to our support, have played, and still play, in Persian politics. They would therefore certainly resent very strongly a partition of their territory, and their resentment would be directed against us rather than against Russia. Until quite recently the tribe was practically open to no foreign influence except our own, and looked to His Majesty's Minister to settle all their internal quarrels and to adjust the nice balance of power between the two branches when the question of the appointment of the Ilkhani and the Ilbeggi came up. Even the big push which Russia has been making at Ispahan of late, and the intimate relations which the Russian consul succeeded in establishing with Sardar Ashjaa, did not seriously shake Sir W. Townley's influence with the khans (one section looked to him as their protector against the Zil-es-Sultan, whose vast interests in Ispahan had just been taken under Russian protection). Since then, however, events have occurred which furnish a useful object-lesson. To assist the Russian Legation to obtain satisfaction for the murder of Baron von Kaver at the end of May, I was constrained to agree to the application of the "Russian" Sardar Ashjaa as Governor of Ispahan to replace Sardar-i-Moteslam, and this concession to Russia, the significance of which the khans misunderstood and exaggerated, gave them an idea that we were, for the moment, powerless, so that they got quite out of hand, while simultaneously German blandishments and German gold proved such an attraction that at one moment our influence with the khans was scarcely more than traditional. That state of affairs appears to be fast passing away, but the experience serves to show what would happen if Ispahan and the regions near it, with all the Bakhtiari interests centred therein, were placed under exclusively Russian influence, and we left Russia the "free hand," which, I understand, it is one of the objects of the proposed revision of the 1907 to secure to each Power in its own sphere. The result cannot be questioned. The tribe would be divided into "British" and "Russian" parties, but both parties possessing a common grievance against Great Britain, viz., that by what they would view as weakness she had permitted the division of the tribe. Not that Russia would be

viewed without disfavour on account of the transaction; Russia and Russian methods have never been popular, but at least she would escape the odium that would attach to us as old friends who had betrayed Bakhtiari confidence.

Moreover, she would be much less vulnerable to Bakhtiari resentment than ourselves. For Russia has no established interests in those regions such as we possess in the Lynch Road and the Anglo-Persian oilfields, successful working in both of which enterprises depends so much on Bakhtiari goodwill. And in both cases Russia has a distinct interest in putting a spoke in our wheel: in the case of the latter because the Anglo-Persian Oil Syndicate is a competitor of the Russian petroleum industry, and as regards the former because the Ahwaz road would be a commercial door into the Russian sphere. Can it be hoped that an active Russian Consular official, of the type we know only too well, would resist the temptation of bringing about a state of insecurity on the road, and so involving us in squabbles with the khans that would find an echo in the oilfields, and in our relations with the Russian Government?

This is possibly the most obvious way in which serious differences of opinion between us and Russia must arise from the contemplated arrangement, but when it is realised what Ispahan means to the Bakhtiaris it will be seen that there would be countless other sources of friction. The Bakhtiari summer quarters are in the districts west of Ispahan, and would partly or wholly—supposing the Russian “frontier” followed the circumference of a circle drawn with Ispahan as centre and the distance Ispahan-Kurmisheh as radius—fall within the Russian sphere. The town itself is the tribe’s market, whither they repair every summer to sell their flocks and produce, and where they buy their European goods for the following season. With the wealth they have of late years acquired the khans have bought lands, gardens, and villages in the neighbourhood of Ispahan, and in the town itself have accumulated quite considerable interests. It is at Ispahan, too, that the periodic family assembly to discuss tribal affairs takes place. It is not too much to say that half the interests of the tribe, both practical and sentimental, are centred at Ispahan, and it requires only the most superficial knowledge of Bakhtiari character to realise that to place Ispahan and its surrounding districts under the protection of Russia would be to create a constant source of irritation and friction between us.

Since writing the foregoing I have gathered from conversations with M. de Etter that, in his opinion, Russian claim should be limited to a very small area immediately round the town of Ispahan. If this should be the official view also, the force of my argument would, of course, be modified, but not by any means to a degree commensurate with the reduction of the Russian claim. The whole case was put in a nutshell only a few days ago by Sardar Assad, who, without any invitation from me, remarked abruptly, “If you want quiet, get the Russians out of Ispahan.” M. de Etter does not wish his opinion to be quoted.

It seems to me incredible that the reasons given by M. Sazonof for Russia’s wish to maintain and extend her zone at Ispahan can really account for her readiness to create such an open sore in her relations with us in this part of the world—a sore, moreover, of which we shall be far more sensible than Russia.

Still, on what may be termed legal grounds, Russian claims to the region south of Ispahan are, it must be conceded, much stronger than ours to the north, for while Russia only asks for a slice out of the present neutral zone, we are asking for a cession from the Russian sphere. As a matter of “sacrifice,” however, we are to be asked to surrender much more than we require of our Ally. The southern limit of the Russian sphere, as defined by the 1907 convention, passes through Ispahan, not south of it, and according to strict letter of the convention we could have endeavoured to consolidate our interests right up to and even into the south side of the town. But we have not done so, but have recognised in the most liberal way that in and around Ispahan, in spite of our ancient predominance, these Russian interests must be treated with friendly respect.

But even so, and notwithstanding the great efforts begun three years ago by the Russian consul and the Russian bank to push Russian interests, Russian influence, though it became a serious competitor, was never in danger of eclipsing our own; and at the present moment—*i.e.*, since the death of Baron von Kaver terminated the contract which placed the vast estates and influence of the Zil-es-Sultan under Russian control—British influence is incomparably the greater of the two. Indeed, were it not that the two Powers are now known to be acting with the most complete harmony, the local influence of Russia—apart from that exercised from Tehran—would be almost nil. We are therefore asking Russia to make but a small sacrifice, *viz.*, to resign a position

which, though legally reserved to her, she has only recently endeavoured to make good.

M. Sazonof's reason for an extension of the Russian sphere demands examination. His Excellency believes that by this means Russian trade in the Russian sphere will be secured against the British competition under which it now suffers. I venture to think that the point is open to question. It is one that seems to resolve itself in a question of cost of transport.*

It may, I think, be assumed that as a consequence of the present war:—

1. The Khorremabad Railway will not be built.
2. The construction of the trans-Persian Railway will be indefinitely postponed, and that when built the trace of the line may be governed by quite different considerations from those obtaining in 1912-4.
3. We become virtual masters in Mesopotamia and Bagdad.

If assumptions 1 and 2 are admitted, the question is narrowed down to this: Can the British trader deliver his goods by the Bagdad-Khanikin route into the Russian sphere at a cheaper rate than the Russian merchant? The large transit trade—the preservation of which was the chief element in deciding His Majesty's Government to construct the Khorremabad Railway—via Bagdad, which is worth about 1,250,000*l.* per annum, proves that he can do so, and if this were possible under the régime of Turkish maladministration and obstruction, it will not be contested that if assumption 3 be conceded the British importer will be still better placed under the vastly improved conditions that our rule would achieve in Mesopotamia. Future railway construction, both Russian and British, has to be taken into account, but it is probable that any resulting change will be in favour of British trade—

1. Because railway construction in the comparatively flat country of Mesopotamia is far cheaper than through the highlands of Western Persia.
2. Our railway administration is cheaper and more efficient than Russian.
3. If the Willcocks schemes of irrigation are carried out, the vast export trade will enable import freights to be kept down.

It is then at least arguable that the inclusion of Ispahan in the Russian sphere will not do for Russian trade all that M. Sazonof expects, any more than as a matter of fact it does at present, though it would possibly secure this trade from our competition at Ispahan itself.

The advantage then is so small, and even doubtful, that the real reason of the Russian demand must be sought elsewhere.

Is it very far to seek? It is useless to blink the fact that from the abolition of the neutral zone and the recognition of the "free hand" the step to partition is short, and when partition comes about, all possibility of British competition in the Russian sphere will be set at rest by the erection of the Russian tariff wall. Thus, whatever the value of M. Sazonof's adduced reasons, they at most hold good for a limited period. The sore created by the division of the Bakhtiari tribe would however still remain, though by the force of the new circumstances it would eventually be healed by the drastic remedies of Russian administration in the East. It may, perhaps, be permitted to call attention to the fact that M. Sazonof is now ready to violate a principle which, during the Turco-Persian frontier negotiations of 1913, was to be held in special respect, viz., that that frontier should not be so traced as to place one part of a tribe in Persian territory and the other part in that of Turkey.

There is another aspect of the case which appears to me to merit study, viz., how the possession by Russia of so large and important a centre as Ispahan must be regarded in relation to our large and ever-increasing interests in the oilfields of Bakhtiaristan and to our future position in Mesopotamia. The question is one of politico-military

* The Russian Minister's reasons postulate that the two routes in the Russian sphere via Ispahan are more costly than that via Bagdad and Khanikin. I am not quite sure that this is the case, and my attempts to get authentic figures here have failed. In any case, freights vary constantly, but it must be conceded that—

- (1.) The irreducible charges owing to second customs examination and to double handling are higher on the Bagdad than on the other routes;
- (2.) That the traffic into Persia by Bushire-Ispahan alone (*i.e.*, without counting in that by the Ahwaz route) is two and a half times greater than that by Bagdad;

but allowance must, of course, be made for the fact that the whole of the imports by Bushire and Ahwaz do not reach the Russian sphere.

character, but it seems to me to involve interests that are likely to be of first-rate importance in the future.

It may be of use, in case His Majesty's Government decide to endeavour to obtain the cession of Ispahan from Russia, that I should indicate roughly what modification of the present limits of the Russian sphere would bring the whole of the Bakhtiari tribe within our sphere. Such a line would commence at or about Bultak, where longitude 50° east cuts the present Russian line, and then, running in the direction of Khonsar, would turn south-east-east, and follow a line roughly parallel to the present Russian, but 18-20 miles north of it, until it met the circumference of a circle drawn with a 25-mile radius on Ispahan as a centre. The sector of that circle would form our northern frontier until it met the existing Russian line—again on the east side of Ispahan. This line does not constitute a very large deflection of the present limits of the Russian sphere.

It does not include all the tribes that bear the name of Bakhtiari, but those that remain outside of it, to the north-west, are a distant branch, and have never stood in the same relations to us as have their connections further south.

C M. M.

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C. 163.

~~B. 243.~~

SECRET.

Revision of Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.

Extract from Secret Letter from the Government of India,
No. 85, dated 29th September 1916.

5. *Russia*.—We have already had occasion to submit our opinions on various matters connected with the *post bellum* settlement with Russia, notably in our Foreign Department secret telegrams¹ of the 19th April, 13th May, and 12th June 1915, but we would take this opportunity of somewhat elaborating our views.

As regards Persia, if the Persian Government maintain their present attitude of neutrality to the end of the war, we may take it that no question of formal partition will arise, and we earnestly hope that this may be so, for we can only regard the proposition of actual partition, involving as it would a very serious increase in our responsibilities, obligations and expenditure, with grave apprehension. But even without actual partition the future of Persia, of course, presents a very difficult problem and one upon which we feel that at the present moment it is impossible to form any final opinion. The Persian situation is too kaleidoscopic for this. Our view roughly, however, is that there must be a rearrangement of spheres of influence whereby the neutral zone falls to Great Britain. We have already, in the telegrams referred to, suggested what we consider would be the ideal line between our own and the Russian sphere, but the line thus suggested was, we realise, a counsel of perfection, and we have no wish to press for it strongly if it is likely to cause difficulties in the negotiations or to make us appear grasping in our demands. As a *pis aller* the existing Russian line might be accepted as it stands. We must face, of course, the fact that within her own zone Russia will probably exercise, whatever we may say, an even stricter administrative control than heretofore, and this will perhaps necessitate the exercise of considerably greater interference by our Consular Officers in local administration and finance within our sphere of influence. It would obviously be undesirable to leave our sphere to the chaos of uncontrolled local Persian rule, while the neighbouring Russian sphere was well-ordered and peaceful. Such a condition would only lead to friction and difficulty. We do not suggest, however, by this any attempt at direct administration. Our aim in the immediate future should be to assist the Persian Government so far as possible themselves to establish a reasonably effective administration in Southern Persia. To this end the South Persia Rifles have been created. The extent of our interference with the actual administration must depend upon the extent to which the Persian Government appear capable of improved administration, but, generally speaking, once we have restored a modicum of peace and order in the main trade centres and on the main trade routes and re-established commercial facilities we should be content merely to advise as regards the actual administration of the country itself. This may appear somewhat a make-shift arrangement, but short of actual partition it appears to be the only course feasible.

As regards the Persian Gulf, we assume that if the present neutral zone falls to us, all Russian claims in the Persian littoral will be *ipso facto* finally extinguished. It might be desirable perhaps to get this definitely stated. This somewhat vague admission by Russia referred to in Sir E. Grey's letter to Sir A. Nicholson, dated 29th August 1907,² in connection with the Anglo-Russian negotiations, might certainly with advantage be reaffirmed in some definite form.

¹ Printed in Appendices A and B of Memorandum C. 142.

² Cd. 3750 of 1907, p. 1.

Turning to Afghanistan, on the assumption that the Amir maintains his neutrality till the conclusion of the war, we consider that we shall be under considerable obligations to him : and so will Russia. Afghanistan could at any moment very seriously increase our embarrassments by joining our enemies, and the fact that she has not done so whatever may have been the motive, must count strongly in her favour. It is true that the present conditions in Afghanistan are unsatisfactory in the extreme ; that we know that Afghanistan is a hot-bed of fanatical and anti-British intrigue ; that if the Amir maintains his neutrality it will be due mainly to the fact that Afghanistan lies between the devil and the deep sea—between Russia and ourselves. It is true that Afghanistan has been, and is, a constant source of anxiety ; that it has been a base of Pan-Islamist intrigue against the allied powers generally. But in spite of all this, if Afghanistan continues to the end neutral, we shall be under heavy practical obligations and there can be no question of our agreeing to any alteration in the status of Afghanistan that would interfere with its treasured independence. Indeed, we shall have to consider some signal recognition of the Amir's services, both as a reward for the past and an encouragement for the future.

Assuming that the political status of Afghanistan is to remain unaltered we consider it of vital importance to the maintenance of that status without undue difficulty and friction, that Russia should abandon the policy of constant and often frivolous complaint and demand which so often embarrassed us in the period antecedent to the war. We fully admit that the present Afghan system of administration may cause some occasional inconvenience to adjoining Russian territory just as it does in adjoining British territory, but that inconvenience was not, we think, such as to warrant the series of demands and complaints which the Russian Government made in regard to Afghanistan during that period. In 1912 they put forward a claim for an irrigation agreement in regard to the Murghab and Hari Rud rivers which was entirely inadmissible in the light of the ruling of the Afghan boundary Commission of 1885. In May 1914 they pressed a proposal to construct an irrigation canal from the Oxus with its head works in Afghan territory, without any explanation of the difficulty or impossibility of locating those head-works in Russian territory. In the same year they pressed for a self-denying ordinance on the part of Great Britain in regard to concessions for railways, irrigation, &c., in Northern Afghanistan, which we pointed out could only have the result of exciting the Amir's liveliest suspicions. In May 1915, in connection with the question of the *post bellum* settlement, they again apparently reverted to this demand. There were also various more or less frivolous complaints, *e.g.*, connected with locusts which had not appeared, and Afghan raids into Russian territory which had not occurred. Indeed, we were forced to the conclusion that the Russian Government had made up their minds to have a standing grievance in regard to Afghanistan, partly perhaps genuine, partly to bargain with in respect of demands elsewhere, while the necessary consequence was to embarrass our relations with the Amir. We hope that with the much more cordial understanding established by the war, Russia may be induced to adopt a more reasonable and generous policy in regard to Afghanistan, and we would insist most strongly on the necessity of urging her to do so. She should be made to realise the peculiar relation in which we are placed by our Treaty obligations with that State, obligations which it would be impossible for us to ignore if the Amir maintains his present neutrality. The Afghan State may be an anachronism ; if so, we must deal gently with it accordingly. We should ask Russia to assist, instead of thwarting us in the work of gradually breaking down the barriers of suspicion and conservatism which surround Afghanistan at present. This she can best do for the present by a policy of "hands off." We on our part shall do our utmost to induce the Amir to adopt a more enlightened policy after the war (and he will doubtless then be more amenable to reason) and thereby to remove such inconveniences as at present exist in the relations between Russian territory and Afghanistan. The Russian Government might, we think, be assured that we have no ulterior motives whatever as regards commercial or other enterprises in Northern Afghanistan, and that we shall be ready to deal promptly with any

definite matters of complaint against the Afghan Government that may arise. All we desire is to be left for the present to guide Afghanistan peacefully to more enlightened ways, without constant interference from Russia, especially in matters which can only serve to excite suspicion in the minds of the Amir and his advisers and thereby prolong the process.

As regards Tibet, here again we want nothing but a reasonable and generous policy on the part of Russia. The circumstances of the last few years, particularly the Tibet Conference and the consequent secret Treaty between Tibet and Great Britain, have placed Tibet in an even closer relation to ourselves than before, and both on this ground and on geographical grounds we must, we think, insist on our very exceptional position. The Chinese yoke has been removed from Tibet: and the Chinese Government have refused to subscribe to a Treaty actually signed by their representative. For the time being therefore Chinese suzerainty has ceased to exist, at any rate, so far as Outer Tibet is concerned. In these circumstances the Tibetan Government have naturally turned to Great Britain for advice and assistance: and these have naturally been accorded. Until the future relations of China and Tibet—and indeed the future status of China herself—have been determined, there must inevitably be a period of diplomatic *chaos* as regards Tibet. Until the position clears, we think that Russia might reasonably agree to our continuing the present practice, to which she has as yet taken no exception, and allow us directly to advise and assist the Tibetan Government—in despite of Article II. of the Tibet Agreement of 1907—and herself abstain from all interference in this country. It might be made plain that we have no desire or intention to avail ourselves of any other privileges, *e.g.*, commercial concessions or the despatch of an Agent to Lhasa, contemplated in the Tripartite Convention. It might be explained that we have no ambitions, territorial or other in Tibet: and that our only wish is that Tibet should develop on peaceful lines without foreign interference.

As regards the New Dominion, we have nothing to add to what is contained in our telegram of the 14th October 1915, in which we strongly deprecated any attempt to bring Chinese Turkistan into the *post bellum* settlement with Russia. If Russia herself raises the question, we should be glad to be consulted, and we need only now repeat that we regard the recognition of a suitable boundary line on this side as an essential preliminary to any negotiations.

It seems inevitable that a complete revision of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 will be necessitated by the *post bellum* settlement and doubtless the future of Iraq will form a portion of the revised Agreement. As already stated, this must closely touch our interests. But it is in regard to any revision of the Agreement regarding Afghanistan that we feel the greatest concern; and we trust that in this respect no arrangement will be concluded without our being given an opportunity of advising on the matter, and if his interests are even remotely affected, of consulting the Amir. This is not only obligatory in accordance with a pledge we have recently given him, but it is essential in order to avoid sowing once more in Kabul the seeds of mistrust and suspicion such as were sown by the Agreement of 1907.



Put away with.....

2696

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1500

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CONFIDENTIAL

Simla

The 3rd September 1915.

Map No. B. 51.
Noted in Mah
Catalogue: copies
placed in Mah Box
(Persia) Cup 6
Room 217
W.H.R. 17/9

P
3493
1915

My dear Hirtzel

Please refer to the telegram from the Secretary of State for India, dated the 30th August 1915, asking for a map showing the provincial boundaries along which the suggested lines of demarcation in Persia run.

Six ^{ies} copy of a sketch map of Persia and the Persian Gulf showing approximately the provincial boundaries, are forwarded herewith, and also a copy of a "Layer" map, in four sheets, with the boundaries marked thereon to show clearly the physical features of the proposals.

Yours sincerely
A H Grant.

To

Sir Arthur Hirtzel, K.C.B.,
Secretary, Political Department,
India Office,
London.



2 copies with
proposed lines
on them
Sent separately
by Parcel Post.
(recd. 5 Oct.)
Unplaced in Mah
Cabinet - Drawer
B. - and
numbered Mah
B. 48

Copy to F.O.
(with 2 copies of each)
13 Oct 15.

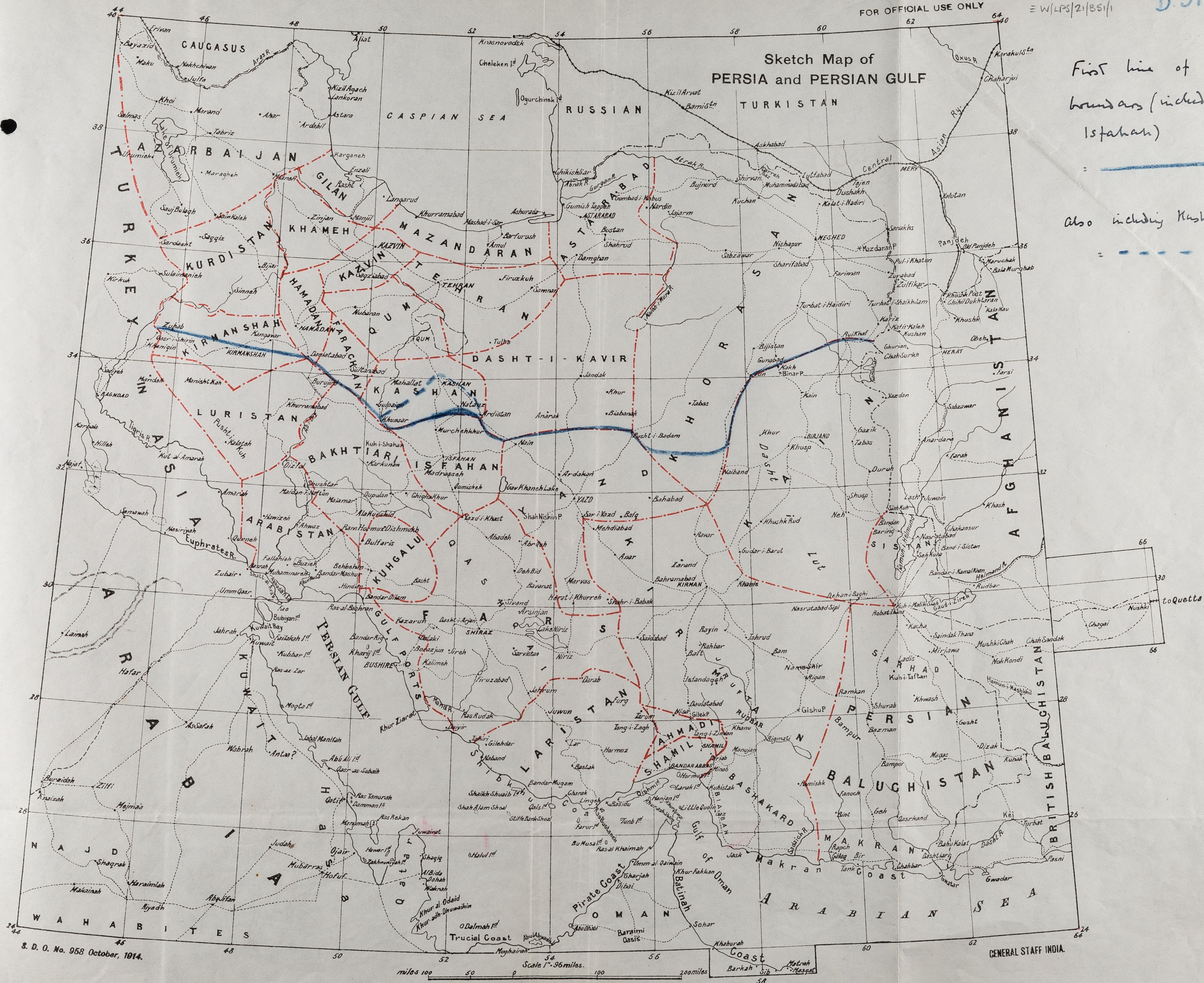
K.P.M.

Put by J.S. 28/9.

See Asst. Secy
on return
see Asst. 12/10

First line of
boundary (including
Istanbul)

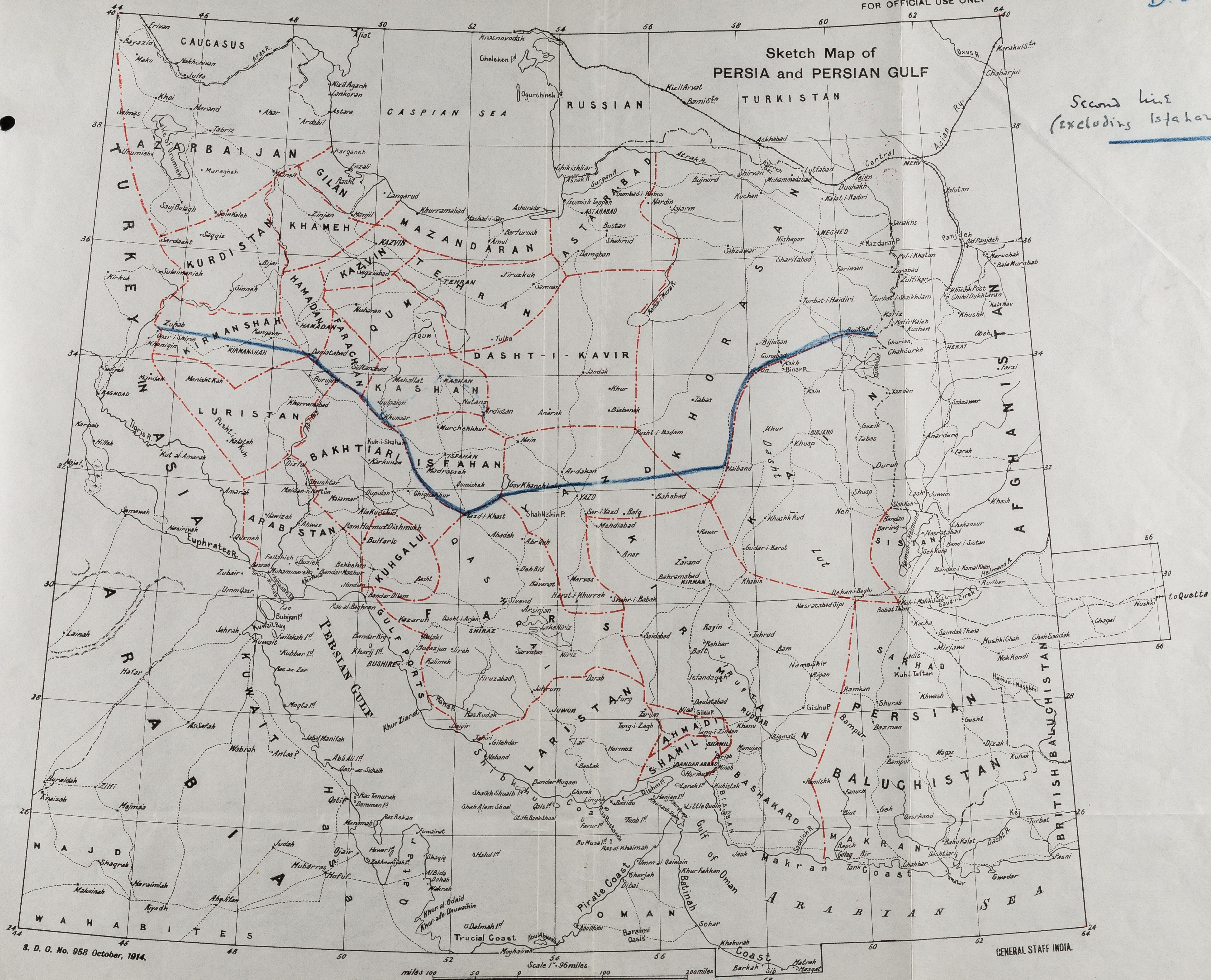
Also including Kashan



FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Sketch Map of PERSIA and PERSIAN GULF

Second line (excluding Istahan)



8. D. O. No. 958 October, 1914.

GENERAL STAFF INDIA

Note: The Boundaries in Red are approximate only.

Put away with 2696
P. 2526

Reminder on

Examined Registry

Secret
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2526

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(42)

Reference Paper.

Pol. & Secret Military Department.

Referred to General Sir E. Barrow

The 13th July 1915

191

For any remarks on the re-arrangement of the spheres in Persia from the military point of view.

(sd) A. Hirtzel

The necessity of coming to an agreement with Russia on this subject without delay is obvious, as on the Russia is in possession of Constantinople she will be the less ready to make concessions to us. That being so the immediate point for consideration is what factors are vital ones for us. The first and supreme factor in the problem is the maintenance of our absolute supremacy in the Persian Gulf.

The second great factor is the recognition of the claims we are establishing to the common political control of Mesopotamia i.e. of the Baghdad - Basra region, and with it of the Karun Valley and the Angle Persian oil fields.

The third essential factor is the inclusion in our sphere of the whole of the Bakhtiari region.

Finally there is the consideration that the further off we can keep Russia and Russian influence the better for us from a military point of view.

The first of the above material factors compels us to include not only the whole of the provinces of Kerman and Fars in our own sphere but also Arabistan, whilst the second and third factors call aloud for

(Form 24.)



(2)

the inclusion of the whole of Khuzistan and Luristan. With those provinces in our complete possession or under our undisputed political influence we may I think be said to have secured for ourselves all military and strategical points essential to us. We shall have entire control of the Gulf and the Oilfields and of Persian Seistan and we shall dominate all possible railway lines approaching India and Afghanistan except of course the one through Herat. There is however still the consideration that the further we can keep Russia away the better and therefore as Sir Arthur Hirtzel proposes we should endeavour to include Yazd and Ispahan in our sphere in the West and as the Viceroy suggests Ghain (Kain) and Birjand on the East. Indeed I am not at all sure that we should not also include Tun and Tabbas which are important oases and might be useful outposts in the great ~~desert~~ desert which protects our sphere on the North. However I should be quite content if we got Birjand and Ghain and Yazd for it seems to me highly improbable that Russia would agree to surrendering Ispahan which by the Anglo Russian agreement of 1907 was so lightly abandoned to Russia. Ghain and Birjand are really more important than Yazd for the reason that if we are at war with Russia the main Russian line of attack must be via Herat, in which case a developed Seistan may have a first rate importance ~~importance~~ for us as a flanking position, which again might attract an attack through Birjand. Lord Curzon's memorandum on the defence of Seistan written about 1902 or 1903 explains clearly the importance of Seistan and its approaches.

Eg Bann
14/5/15



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S/J.

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x on the
Anglo-
Russian
Agreement,
1907-

This memo. may be sent to the 7.0.
as the India Office's preliminary
contribution to the consideration
of the subject - W. Sir L. Grey
is about to submit to a Committee
for report on British Desiderata
in Persia, Afghanistan &
Tibet.

2. W. H. A.

9/8/15

Yes.

Please supply copy for my
use
AC
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W. H. A.
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SECRET.

Revision of Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907.

MEMORANDUM BY POLITICAL DEPARTMENT, INDIA OFFICE.

I.

In accepting the Russian proposals about Constantinople His Majesty's Government deferred stating their own *desiderata*, but said that they would include the transfer of the neutral sphere in Persia to our sphere. In accepting this the Russian Government revived certain questions connected with Afghanistan which had been discussed last year in connexion with Tibet. Thus in effect the whole of the Anglo-Russian Agreement has been brought into question.

Before going into details there are one or two generalities to be considered.

1. The obvious and natural time to put forward our *desiderata* about Persia is when we come to discuss with the Allies the future of the Ottoman Empire, and this is what the Foreign Office contemplate. Then will be the time for bargaining. Russia will be getting Constantinople, and possibly a great deal more in Armenia and on the Black Sea; and until we know how much she will want and is going to get there, it is difficult to judge how much we may with reason expect her to give in Persia and elsewhere.

2. Does the same consideration apply to Afghanistan, and even Tibet? In Afghanistan the Russians have their *desiderata*, in Tibet (which has not been expressly mentioned by either party) we have ours. It is inconvenient to split up one Agreement by separate treatment. It will be difficult, I believe, to get the Russians to abandon their wishes in Afghanistan, for irrigation is really a serious problem for them. We cannot refuse to discuss them altogether, and it will be no answer to Russia (apart from being inexpedient) to say that we no longer want anything in Tibet. When are we likely to find her most amenable as regards both—when the main issue of the European war is still uncertain, and her own military and other weakness is palpable, and when, moreover, large deals in territory may be under discussion in Asia Minor at someone else's expense? or after the war, when she is once more secure, when past services are forgotten, and when, if it be necessary to buy her off, we shall have to do so at our own expense, and may be hard put to it to find a *quid pro quo*?

It seems to me that *primâ facie* the more advantageous course is to agree with our adversary while we are in the way with him, and to make a clean sweep of the Anglo-Russian agreement at once.

But there are considerations on the other side:—

- (a) The treatment which Persia and Afghanistan are to receive after the war must depend upon their behavior during the war. How then can we agree with Russia about them till after the war? Persia, perhaps, has already behaved so badly that she will need scant consideration. But the Amir has behaved extremely well, and if he maintains his neutrality to the end he will have put Russia, no less than ourselves, under obligations which it will be difficult to repay, and which we certainly cannot repay by partitioning his kingdom.

(b) Again, the nature of our future relations with Russia depends largely on the kind of Russia that is going to emerge from the war. The Government of India talk about impressing on the Russian Government that a change in their attitude towards British interests in Asia is very desirable. So it may be. But it will not come after the war, any more than it came after the Anglo-Russian Agreement, unless there is going to be a new spirit in the Russian bureaucracy, and the old tchinovniks are sent about their business, and people are put in with whom we can deal. What are the prospects of that? The present internal condition of Russia seems to be insecure. Moscow rose against certain reactionary ministers, and they have disappeared. Is this the beginning of a really constitutional Government? Will it be continued and extended after the war? And whether is better for us—to revise all our agreements with the Russian Government as we know it, or to keep things going as they are and try to tide over till there is a better Russian Government? Or, on the other hand, shall we not see, after the war, changes in the conduct of our own foreign relations, in the direction of more effective Parliamentary control, the tendency of which may be to weaken our hands in dealing with Russia in matters not of vital importance, or the vital importance of which is not easily recognisable?

(c) To return to Afghanistan—there is the obvious danger of concluding an Agreement with Russia now which must be kept secret until some time after the war; which, if divulged or even suspected, would do incalculable harm; and to which, when the time comes, the Amir is not likely to give effect.

These are weighty considerations, and though the policy of putting off the evil day is nearly always wrong, it may be held in this case that they prevail over the others, and that we should make an attempt to get the Russian Government to postpone the Afghan question, provided that, in doing so, we do not use any language that may prejudice the Tibetan question, which will some day be of great importance. But it must be expected that the Russians, looking at the matter from their own point of view, and for reasons the exact converse of ours, will resist the attempt; and in the refusal of the Amir to accept the Agreement of 1907 and their own toleration for over seven years, they have a powerful argument.

II.

PERSIA.

The Persian question must, however, be proceeded with. What we can reasonably expect Russia to give us must, as already observed, depend partly on what she is going to get elsewhere. But there are some considerations arising out of the Anglo-Russian Agreement itself which must be taken into account. Sir Richmond Ritchie, who was Political Secretary when the Agreement was negotiated, used to call it an "abdication"; and most of the difficulties that have since arisen have been due to the fact that His Majesty's Government, having abdicated in theory, found themselves quite unable to abdicate in practice. While securing recognition for our position in the Gulf, in Persia itself we took as our own sphere the one

region in which we had no commercial interests worth speaking of (though Seistan is, of course, capable of immense development in the future); and all that from the merchant's point of view, and a good deal that from the political point of view, was most worth having, we allowed to become either Russian or neutral. Since then we have been endeavouring to evade the consequences by constantly interfering with Russia in her own sphere, and by treating the neutral sphere as though it were our own. The former was unnecessary, except in cases like the bombardment of the Meshed Shrine (and the execution of the Tabriz Mujtahids) the effects of which were felt throughout the Moslem world. But the latter was inevitable if we did not want to sacrifice the rest of our trade, and with it our political influence, and see Russia sooner or later on the shores of the Gulf. But it can hardly have been what Russia expected when she signed the Agreement, and in considering whether her willingness to relinquish the neutral sphere is in itself a reasonable proposition, or whether we should ask for more, it is necessary to look at it from her point of view as well as our own. From that standpoint the offer must seem to her to be a sufficiently handsome one. Moreover, had she proposed to divide the neutral sphere she would have put us in a great difficulty; for our interests are so distributed throughout its whole extent that there is literally no substantial part of it that we can afford to sacrifice. In fact, we are asked to sacrifice nothing except a small, but (from the Russian point of view) not unimportant area on the Afghan frontier. Yet not content with this, the Government of India want us to ask for Yezd, Ispahan, and Kermanshah. We made a present of these to Russia in 1907; with what eyes will she regard a request for their restoration in 1915? Commercially they are important to her, partly because they are the principal objectives of our trade, which she wants to capture, partly because from Ispahan and Yezd she can eventually flood our own sphere with her bounty-fed goods. Accordingly, at Kermanshah she has done her best to throttle our trade by tolerating, if not fomenting, such disorder on the Khanikin road that our great trade *viâ* Bagdad had, for some time before the war, been practically held up at the frontier. At Ispahan she has entrenched herself strongly by characteristic measures—by the control of the Russian bank over the Zil-es-Sultan's property, and by acquiring land through the medium of Russian-protected Persian subjects. At Yezd we do not seem to have heard of any special activity. These three places are further important to her strategically—Kermanshah as commanding the road to Bagdad and the Gulf and the oil fields at Chiah Surkh, Ispahan as commanding the Ahwaz-Gulf and Shiraz-Gulf roads, as well as the oil fields at Maidan-i-Naphtun, and Yezd as a stage towards Kerman-Seistan and Kerman-Chahbar, on the cherished Trans-Persian Railway. Ispahan is important to her politically—apart from historical reasons—as a point from which to control the Bakhtiari, who penetrate far down into our future sphere, and on whose loyalty we very largely depend. It is obvious that she will not lightly relinquish these advantages.

For compensation we must mainly look elsewhere, since in Persia there is nothing to offer save the Zulfikar salient, and the southern environs of Ispahan and Yezd, for which Russia has already asked. This, however, though small, is not unimportant. The lines were drawn in 1907 to prevent the Russian sphere from abutting on the Afghan frontier. This is a matter of considerable importance to us politically, because we are responsible for

the Amir's relations with both Persia and Russia. But it is important to Russia economically to acquire the salient, because it will bring some 70 miles of the Hari Rud into her sphere, and so strengthen her hold on that river for irrigation purposes. [This fact shows, incidentally, that it may be difficult to separate the Afghan from the Persian question in the negotiations.]

We have therefore something to bargain with, and I think we might hope to get Yezd with it, if we ask for Ispahan and Kermanshah as well.

It remains to consider what disadvantage we shall suffer if these three places—or two of them—remain in Russian hands, and what safeguards we ought in that case to require. So long as Persia is not actually partitioned, any disadvantages will be at their smallest; but partition is an eventuality for which we must be prepared. Meanwhile the worst feature is the political inconvenience that will be caused to us through the Bakhtiari from Ispahan. For this there appears to be no remedy except, as we suggested to the Government of India, to adjust the line west of Ispahan so as to bring the Bakhtiari entirely within our sphere. In this way it will be reduced to the smallest dimensions. But so long as Ispahan and Tehran (where some of the leading khans spend a considerable portion of their time) are Russian, there is sure to be intrigue.

Commercially, so long as there are no railways, it does not appear that we shall be much worse off, provided that order is restored, and that the Persians do not, under Russian influence, revise their customs tariff to our disadvantage, as in 1901-03. Some agreement with Russia on both these points therefore seems essential.

But the advent of railways cannot be long delayed, and Russia has reserved the question of railway construction in the present neutral sphere for future consideration. From this it may perhaps be inferred that she abandons the extreme claims made in 1913 in the Trans-Persian Railway negotiations. She then opposed strongly our proposed Bunder Abbas-Shiraz-Ahwaz concession (which she suspected us of wanting to link up with the Bagdad Railway and so wrecking her own scheme), and claimed for herself the right to construct, or be predominant in, the following:—

Ispahan—Shiraz.

Ispahan—Ahwaz.

Ispahan—Khorremabad.

Yezd—Shiraz.

Yezd—Kerman.

It seems desirable, while accepting her proposal to consider railways later, to get from her now a definite recognition of our predominance on all these lines, as well as a general acceptance of a formula prohibiting discrimination on any railways in Persia. But there is one line which I incline to think that we should insist on at once as a condition of our leaving her Ispahan and Kermanshah, viz., the extension of our Mohammera-Khorremabad project to Hamadan. In practice this would mean that Russia would extend her Julfa-Tabriz line to meet our Mohammera-Khorremabad line at its entrance to the Russian zone. If we can secure that, we are independent of the Bagdad-Khanikin-Kermanshah road. It will be opposed, but we ought to fight for it, and, as this Office has argued before, if the Russians are genuine in their desire to co-operate with us, here is an opportunity for the joint development of the richest part of Persia.

Two other projects must be mentioned. (a) Any attempt to raise the Trans-Persian Railway question should be avoided. We do not want to embark on any scheme connecting India with Europe until we have seen what the new India after the war is going to be like; and we do not want to be further committed to this particular scheme until we have seen the new Russia. Further, the Bagdad Railway will now enter on a new phase; and if it is to be completed—as I hope it will *not* be—it will be for consideration whether it will not give a better through connexion than the Russian scheme. (b) It must be anticipated that one of the first things the Russians will do in their own sphere when their hands are free is to construct the Askabad-Meshed line. This project has always been a bugbear to us, and one of the conditions on which we assented to the Trans-Persian principle was that it should not be constructed without a previous understanding with us. Now, by giving Russia the Zulfikar salient, we shall have made it possible for her to extend it, within her own sphere, to within measurable distance of Seistan. It seems to me that we cannot hope to succeed in blocking it for ever. It is absurd that Meshed should not sooner or later be connected with the Trans-Caspian system. And, further, I believe that in a not very remote future we may have to agree to link it up with a line of our own from the sea, because it is surely quite certain that when Central Asia is developed, access to the sea at some nearer point than Vladivostok or Constantinople will be absolutely essential to Russian interests, and we shall have to revise our own attitude towards those interests as surely as the Government of India would have Russia revise her attitude towards ours. This consideration suggests that, without mentioning the railway, we should endeavour to get Russia now to agree—in consideration of our special interests in Afghanistan—to discuss with us beforehand any undertaking contemplated in her sphere within a given distance of the Afghan frontier. In return for this we might, if necessary, agree to some joint arrangement with regard to any portion of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company's concession which is within the Russian sphere.

The Government of India very naturally point out the consequences of giving Russia a free hand in her own sphere. It will become virtually a Russian province, and the capital will always be under Russian control. But those conditions really exist already, and I venture to think that it is better to face the facts, and make our own arrangements in our own sphere, than to attempt to impose restrictions which Russia, even if she keeps them in the letter, will (as we shall think) break in the spirit. Surely we know enough now to realize that it is idle to talk of "making revival of Persia possible." The happiness and prosperity of the people of that unfortunate country depend, so far as can be foreseen, upon administration which only outside control—whether directly or indirectly exercised—can secure. A scheme for such control ought to be part of our settlement, not only in the interest of the people, but as a means of obviating friction between ourselves and Russia. Probably it would take the form of Inspectors-General, Russian and British, in our respective spheres.

The conclusions seem to be :—

(1) That there is something to be said for endeavouring to reserve the Afghan question for consideration after the war, but that it will be difficult to do so, partly because it is really important to Russia, partly because the re-alignment of the Russian sphere in Persia itself involves it.

- (2) That, as regards Persia, we should--
- (a) Try to get the Government of India's first line, *i.e.*, Yezd, Ispahan, and Kermanshah (Ispahan being the most important), and not be content with less than Yezd *plus* Tun and Tabas, as suggested by Sir E. Barrow.
 - (b) Insist on at least the following conditions if we have to give up Ispahan and Kermanshah :—
 - (i.) The line to be re-adjusted west of Ispahan so as to bring the whole of the Bakhtiari country and Luristan* within our sphere.
 - (ii.) Russia to undertake to restore and maintain order on the Khanikin—Kermanshah road.
 - (iii.) Persian customs tariff not to be revised except by agreement between Russia and ourselves.
 - (iv.) Russia to withdraw her blocking claims to railways and to recognise our predominance on all railways in our future sphere, while we admit her to participation as may be hereafter agreed.
 - (v.) Russia to agree to extension of Mohammera—Khorremabad line to Hamadan, joining up with us from the north if she pleases.
 - (c) Induce Russia to accept an agreement providing for—
 - (i.) No differential rates, &c., on any Persian railways.
 - (ii.) Any proposed undertaking in the Russian sphere in the neighbourhood of the Afghan frontier to be the subject of joint discussion.
 - (d) Concert with Russia a scheme for the joint control of Persian administration.

NOTE ON THE PERSIAN QUESTION BY GENERAL SIR EDMUND BARROW.

The necessity of coming to an agreement with Russia on this subject without delay is obvious, as once Russia is in possession of Constantinople she will be the less ready to make concessions to us. That being so, the immediate point for consideration is what factors are vital ones for us.

The first and supreme factor in the problem is the maintenance of our absolute supremacy in the Persian Gulf.

The second great factor is the recognition of the claims we are establishing to the political control of Mesopotamia, *i.e.*, of the Baghdad-Basra region, and with it of the Karun Valley and the Anglo-Persian oil-fields.

The third essential factor is the inclusion in our sphere of the whole of the Bakhtiari region.

Finally, there is the consideration that the further off we can keep Russia and Russian influence the better for us from a military point of view.

The first of the above material factors compels us to include not only the whole of the provinces of Kerman and Fars in our own sphere

* This will give us Burujird, which is better than nothing if we cannot get our railway through to Hamadan.

but also Arabistan, whilst the second and third factors call aloud for the inclusion of the whole of Khuzistan and Luristan. With those provinces in our complete possession or under our undisputed political influence we may, I think, be said to have secured for ourselves all military and strategical points essential to us. We shall have entire control of the Gulf and the oilfields and of Persian Seistan, and we shall dominate all possible railway lines approaching India and Afghanistan, except of course the one through Herat. There is, however, still the consideration that the further we can keep Russia away the better; and therefore, as Sir Arthur Hirtzel proposes, we should endeavour to include Yezd and Ispahan in our sphere in the West, and, as the Viceroy suggests, Ghain (Kain) and Birjand on the East. Indeed, I am not at all sure that we should not also include Tun and Tabas, which are important oases and might be useful outposts in the great desert which protects our sphere on the North. However, I should be quite content if we got Birjand and Ghain and Yezd; for it seems to me highly improbable that Russia would agree to surrendering Ispahan, which by the Anglo-Russian agreement of 1907 was so lightly abandoned to Russia. Ghain and Birjand are really more important than Yezd, for the reason that if we are at war with Russia the main Russian line of attack must be *viâ* Herat, in which case a developed Seistan may have a first-rate importance for us as a flanking position, which again might attract an attack through Birjand.

Lord Curzon's memorandum on the defence of Seistan, written about 1902 or 1903, explains clearly the importance of Seistan and its approaches.

III.

AFGHANISTAN AND TIBET.

In case it is found necessary to take up the questions of Afghanistan and Tibet in the near future, it would seem desirable to arrive at some conclusion without delay as to the policy we are to adopt.

As regards Tibet, the position is that a "tripartite" (Anglo-Sino-Tibetan) Convention was negotiated in India last year, but has remained inoperative owing to the refusal of the Chinese to sign. The terms of this Convention, which had been *initialled* by the three plenipotentiaries on the 27th April, were communicated to the Russian Government in May 1914. Though described by M. Sazonow as "abrogating" (and again as "virtually tearing up") the Tibetan section of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907, the new instrument, in point of fact, affects the 1907 Agreement at two points only, viz. :—

- (1.) Article 6 of the Convention renders necessary the rescission of the "self-denying ordinances" contained in Article 4 of the 1907 Agreement, under which Great Britain and Russia undertook to seek no concessions in Tibet;
- (2.) Article 8, giving the British Trade Agent at Gyantse the right of access to Lhasa under certain conditions, conflicts with Article 3 of the Agreement, under which both Russia and Great Britain engaged not to send representatives to Lhasa.

After a good deal of discussion the Russian Government on the 19th May 1914 expressed their willingness to accept the Convention subject to one modification, on the following conditions:—

- (1.) *Article 6.*—The British and Russian Governments to engage, by an exchange of notes published simultaneously with the Convention, not to ask for concessions for their respective subjects without previous mutual understanding.

The Russian Government to engage in a secret note not to ask for concessions for Russian subjects nor to oppose any request by His Majesty's Government for concessions in favour of British subjects.

- (2.) *Article 8.*—The British Government to engage, by an exchange of published notes, not to put this Article into force without previous agreement with Russia. The latter to engage, by a secret note, to raise no objection to the Gyantse Trade Agent proceeding to Lhasa, whenever it should be thought necessary for him to do so, on the understanding that he must retain the character of a commercial, not a political, agent.

- (3.) Great Britain to address a note to Russia engaging “not to support
“any demand on the part of British subjects for irrigation works,
“railways, or any preferential rights for commercial or industrial
“enterprises in Northern Afghanistan.”

M. Sazonow subsequently agreed to the immediate signature of the Convention, provided the British Government at once addressed an official note to him engaging not to give effect to Articles 6 and 8 without a previous understanding with Russia.

His Majesty's Government agreed to the third of the Russian conditions*, subject to the stipulation that “Northern Afghanistan” should be defined, by means of an interchange of secret notes, in the manner desired by the Government of India†; but M. Sazonow demurred altogether to the proposed definition, mainly because the area defined did not include the Hari Rud, the most important river of all for the purposes of Trans-Caspian irrigation. He also pressed for the publication of the definition.

On 3rd July 1914 the Chinese finally declined to sign the Tibet Convention, and, as a consequence, the negotiations with Russia were suspended. We informed the Russian Government on 11th July of what had happened and undertook to consult them before acting upon any of the provisions of the Convention that conflicted with the 1907 Agreement.

It must be added that, quite independently of the Tibet negotiations, the Russian Government in May 1914 called attention to the urgent need, in the interests of Russian Transcaspia, of the construction of irrigation works on the Russo-Afghan frontier. They also formulated definite proposals by which the water needed for the scheme was to be drawn entirely from Afghan territory, and invited His Majesty's Government to

* His Majesty's Government proposed that the engagement should be given as part of a joint declaration by the two Governments in which Russia was to reaffirm the principle that Afghanistan is outside the sphere of her political influence. The Russian Government agreed to the proposed reaffirmation.

† Viz., as the region lying north of the following line:—Iskhasham on Abipanja to Zebak, thence to Munjan Pass, thence to Nawak Pass, thence to Murgh Pass, thence to Doshi, from there *via* Sanjitak and Badkak Passes to Doab-i-Shah Pasand, thence to Tarkuch on Band-i-amir, thence to Daulat Yar. From this point the line would follow the crests of the following ranges:—Band-i-baba and Siyah Bubak, and thence to the point where the Hari Rud enters Russian territory at Zulfikar.

obtain the Amir's consent. The matter was under consideration at the time of the outbreak of the war.

The Afghan question has since been revived by the Russian Government in connection with the discussion of the ultimate terms of peace. A memorandum by the Russian Ambassador dated 22nd March 1915, after enumerating the Russian *desiderata* for a general settlement, ended with the following paragraph: — “Enfin le Gouvernement Impérial considère qu'il “serait désirable qu'en même temps les questions du nord de l'Afghanistan, “limitrophe avec la Russie, reçoivent une solution dans l'esprit de désirs “exprimés à ce sujet par le Gouvernement Impérial au cours des pour- “parlers de l'année dernière.” The telegrams to and from the Government

* To Government of India, dated 8th May 1915.

From ditto, dated 13th May 1915.

To ditto, dated 17th May 1915.

From ditto, dated 10th June 1915.

of India* on the Russian proposal are printed in Appendix B. below. As regards irrigation a draft formula was prepared in the India Office, and accepted by the Government of India in the Viceroy's telegram of the 10th June 1915, as suitable for proposal to the Russian Government. This formula is printed in the first column of Appendix C.

It is to be doubted, however, whether the formula, as it stands, will satisfy the Russian Government. It must be remembered that Russia has asked us not only (1) to make arrangements to meet her own irrigational needs, but (2) formally to disinterest ourselves in all commercial (including irrigational) enterprises in “Northern Afghanistan.” The draft formula (though it contains the phrase “Northern Afghanistan”) is silent on point (2); and while we should be glad enough to see this point tacitly dropped, we must be prepared for the Russians to press it. If they do, and if it is found necessary to meet their wishes, our object should be to give the required undertaking in such a form as will be least calculated to arouse the Amir's suspicions or to convey any suggestion of a partition of Afghanistan, or of its division into “spheres of influence,” commercial or otherwise. With this object the draft formula might be modified as shown in the second column of Appendix C., the effect being (1) to introduce the renunciation required of us incidentally, and as a subsidiary point, into a document primarily dealing with a practical question of irrigation rights, in which Russia and Afghanistan are clearly the only parties interested; and (2) to make it apply, not to “Northern Afghanistan” or to any defined section of the Amir's Kingdom, but merely to certain specified rivers, all of which flow through Russian as well as Afghan territory.

It should be noted that, even under the revised formula, our renunciation will cover *irrigation* projects only, to the exclusion of “railways or any preferential rights for commercial or industrial enterprises” mentioned by M. Sazonow in May 1914. But, as irrigation is the Russians' main concern—and probably the only one in which they are genuinely interested—they would perhaps be ready to accept a compromise on the lines indicated.

It is important, if we come to terms with Russia about Tibet, to get rid of the elaborate machinery of “secret” and “published” notes favoured by M. Sazonow last year, and to obtain instead a plain intimation from Russia that she accepts the Tibet Convention and is willing to regard Article 4 of the 1907 Agreement as having lapsed, so far as concessions to British subjects are concerned.

IV.

RUSSO-AFGHAN FRONTIER.

OWNERSHIP OF ISLANDS IN THE OXUS.

Another Afghan question still outstanding is that of certain islands in the river Oxus on the Russo-Afghan frontier.

The settlement of 1872-3, known as the "Clarendon-Gortchakoff Agreement," which was negotiated between Great Britain and Russia without reference to the Amir, fixed the Oxus as the northern boundary of Afghanistan from Lake Victoria or Wood's Lake (about long. $73^{\circ} 50'$) in the East to Khoja Saleh (about long. $66^{\circ} 10'$) in the West. No special provision was made for regulating the ownership of *enclaves* or islands in the river itself; but it seems to have been assumed on our side that what the Government of India describe (letter of 20th April 1905) as "the old and "general rule by which the deep stream constitutes the boundary of jurisdiction and ownership" would be applied throughout.

The Yangi Kila case.—Yangi Kila is an island some 20 miles in length, situated in about long. 70° . The locality was visited by Lieutenant J. Wood, of the Indian Navy, in 1838, while employed with Captain Burnes' mission to Afghanistan; but our information regarding the whole tract is extremely meagre. The strategic possibilities of the island were discussed by the Government of India in June 1914 in the following terms:—

"It would appear that the proximity of the island of Yangi Kila to the Chubek-Samti ferry gives it a certain military value in view of the fact that the Russians have a road from Termez along the right bank of the Oxus to Chubek-Samti ferry, linking up Kulab, a place of some importance in Bokhara, with the Khawak and other passes over the Hindu Kush *viâ* Talikhan and Deh Saleh. The island could thus be made use of for facilitating the passage of the Upper Oxus by a small Russian force, detailed either to make a secondary advance towards the Hindu Kush, or to create a diversion in Badakhshan *viâ* Faizabad on the Kokcha river in the direction of Chiga Sarai on the Kunar river. In view of these possibilities it would be to our interest to secure the island, if possible, for the Amir as an admitted part of Afghan territory."

It appears that the main stream of the Oxus formerly ran south of Yangi Kila, but has in recent years been diverted to the North. The ownership of the island has in consequence been the subject of dispute, and at one time (1904) both Russian and Afghan guards were in occupation. No actual collision occurred, however, and the Russians subsequently withdrew. The Amir placed the case before Mr. Dane at Kabul in February 1905, but His Majesty's Government thought the moment inopportune for raising the question with Russia.

Nothing more was heard of the dispute until February 1914, when the Amir again addressed the Viceroy on the subject, asking for His Excellency's good offices in effecting a settlement. He argued that the Russians could not expect to have it both ways; and that, as they had claimed accretions of territory consequent upon southerly diversions of the Oxus, they ought to allow corresponding advantages to Afghanistan when the channel was

diverted northwards.* In a subsequent letter (19th August 1914) the Amir mentioned two other tracts, in regard to which similar disputes had arisen, viz. :—(1) the forest of Bandar-i-Kam Saligh in Kattaghan, and (2) the tract of land and forest in the bed of the river situated in Hazrat-i-Imamsahib (or sai'id), opposite Sarai Kamar-i-Kharija,† both of which he claimed as Afghan territory. The Viceroy replied (19th October 1914) that His Majesty's Government would be in a better position to take up the case with Russia if they were possessed of accurate local information; he accordingly suggested that a small British mission, including a survey officer, should "proceed to the Oxus and there make a full examination of these tracts and "of any other tracts in the vicinity that may become the subject of dispute." The Amir replied on the 28th April 1915 that, in view of the preoccupations of Great Britain and Russia elsewhere, he would not press for further action; he added that his officers would be instructed to do nothing likely to cause disturbance.

If the question is now to be raised with the Russian Government, our object should presumably be (1) to obtain their assent to the general principle that the main current of the river, for the time being, forms the frontier; and (2) to induce them to admit the Amir's claims to Yangi Kila and the other tracts mentioned in his letter of the 19th August 1914. If difficulties are made about (2), it may be necessary, after the war, to revive the suggestion of a British mission to investigate locally. Incidentally, such a mission would have valuable geographical results (the region being almost unknown), apart from the military and political intelligence which our officers might be expected to collect. But it is very doubtful whether the Amir would consent.

V.

CHINESE TURKESTAN: THE HUNZA QUESTION.

A further question, upon which (though outside the scope of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907) an understanding with Russia might be desirable, is that of the Hunza boundary.

Stated very briefly, the situation in regard to Hunza (which is a small hill state situated to the extreme north-west of Kashmir, in the region "where three Empires meet," *i.e.*, where the British, Russian, and Chinese frontiers in Central Asia converge towards a single point) is as follows:—The Chief (or "Mir") of Hunza, who is a tributary of the Maharaja of Kashmir, has certain rather vague "rights of occupancy" over tracts known as Raskam and the Taghdumbash Pamir, in the Chinese district of Sarikol (Chinese Turkestan). On the other hand, China claims (and the claim derives some colour from the periodical exchange of presents between the Mir and the Chinese authorities at Kashgar, with which we

* "In the vicinity of Shighnan the river has changed its course towards Afghan territory, and the land left on the other side of the water is regarded by the Russians as theirs; while, in the vicinity of Yangi Kila, the river has changed its course towards Russian territory, and the land left on this side of the water is also regarded by the Russians as Russian territory. Then what is the boundary line, and what is the meaning of the boundary settlement?"—Amir to Viceroy, 17th February 1914.

† Hazrat-i-Imamsahib is situated in about long. 69°; Bandar-i-Kam Saligh cannot be traced on the map. Both tracts are in the Kattaghan (Kunduz) district.

have not thought fit to interfere) to exercise "concurrent jurisdiction" of a shadowy sort over Hunza itself.

The Hunza-China border has never been delimited; but an excellent "natural" frontier is afforded by the main watershed of the Mustagh range. In 1899 we made definite proposals to China for the settlement of the whole question, on the basis of (1) surrender by Hunza of practically all rights beyond the watershed, and (2) Chinese relinquishment of all claims in respect of Hunza itself. The Chinese Government, however, did not respond to our advances, and the matter was allowed to drop.

The position has been complicated in the past by the attitude of Russia, who in 1899 professed to see, in our advocacy of Hunza rights in Raskam, an attempt to outflank the Russian position in the Pamirs. There is the further consideration that sooner or later, whether we like it or not, Russia is likely to absorb Chinese Turkestan. She already dominates the Sarikol district from her post at Tashkurghan; and until quite recently the process of further absorption appeared to be developing very rapidly. The Tashkurghan post was strengthened in 1911, and in the following year local disturbances at Kashgar were made the pretext for reinforcing the Russian Consular Guard; while the unceasing activity displayed by Russian officials at both places made it evident, as the Government of India reported in July 1912, that a policy of "peaceful penetration" was being vigorously pursued and was likely, if unchecked, to end in permanent occupation. On the other hand, M. Sazonow, during his visit to England in the autumn of 1912, declared categorically to Lord Crewe that Russia had no wish to take over the administration of Chinese Turkestan, and would make no move in any part of the province without first informing His Majesty's Government. Since 1912, the situation has been quieter and local Russian activities less conspicuous; but the prospect of ultimate Russian occupation remains.

Chinese pretensions in Hunza matter little so long as China is the claimant, but might prove very embarrassing if transferred to Russia; it is, therefore, desirable to dispose finally of them before Russia steps into China's shoes in Chinese Turkestan. For this purpose, however, our first requirement is an agreement *with China*, not with Russia; the most that we could ask of the latter at this stage would be (1) a repetition, in more formal terms, of M. Sazonow's assurances of 1912, and (2) a generally benevolent attitude towards our negotiations with China. Neither of these *desiderata* is very substantial, and on the whole there seems little to be gained by raising the Hunza question in the present connection.

India Office.
August 1915.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

TELEGRAMS RELATING TO PERSIA.

No. 1.

From Viceroy, 23rd March 1915.

(Extract.)

As regards Persia, if she maintains nominal neutrality, we consider that our interests will be best served if Russia can be induced, in return for important concessions elsewhere, to relax her hold on Northern Persia and to give Persia a chance to revive. Russian retirement from Northern Persia at our instance would inspire confidence in Moslem world, and would save us from serious additional military and civil obligations involved in partition. If, however, Persia definitely goes into the war against us, eventual partition would appear only course open, and such partition might follow a line from about Yazdan (Sharakhs) on east, passing just south of Yazd to Yazd-i-Khast, thence through Madraseh to Khoramabad and thence along the boundary of the Russian zone to near Kasr-i-Shirin. In the event of partition being inevitable, this should be our claim, but it will require more careful consideration in detail than we have been able to give it within the last few days.

No. 2.

From Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 29th March 1915.

(Extract.)

Line proposed in penultimate paragraph of your telegram of 23rd March seems to cut Bakhtiari in two. In any eventual partition or readjustment of spheres Bakhtiari should, if possible, be entirely in our sphere. Any new demarcation line should not be mere line on map but should follow easily recognisable natural features such as watersheds. Please consider further in this sense, and propose two lines one including, the other excluding, Ispahan.

No. 3.

From Viceroy, 19th April 1915.

Reference to latter portion of your telegram of the 29th March last. Partition of Persia. We wish it clearly understood that we put forward partition as an unwelcome necessity in the event of Persia forsaking her neutrality, and regard additional responsibilities entailed, vague and undefined as they are, with utmost diffidence. Partition and spheres of influence are two entirely different propositions, and we sincerely trust that former may be avoided.

Subject to these remarks, we propose following alternative lines:—

(1.) Including Ispahan. We propose as our northern limit province of Kain, southern salient of Khorasan, provinces of Yazd, Ispahan, Bakhtiari, and Luristan. In this case our strategic requirements are hills surrounding Kain, Birjand, and extending to Afghan border, high headland around Naiband, hills north and north-east of Yazd, commanding roads from Meshed and Asterabad, high ground running north-westward from Nain to about Natanz, including Kashan if possible, but in any case running westward

along watershed to Khunsar on border of Bakhtiari country ; thence following high ground north-west to Daulatabad ; thence westward to Kasri-Shirin, including Kermanshah if possible, but otherwise following natural features nearest to tribal border.

(2.) Line excluding Ispahan. We propose as our northern limit provinces of Kain Kerman, southern portion of Yazd including Yazd City, Fars, Bakhtiari, including Luristan. Our strategical requirements would be the same as regards Birjand, Kain, and Naiband, whence line should follow hills north of Yazd, as in former alternative, to south of Salt Lake, namely, south of Burneh Chah to Yazd-i-Khast, whence it would follow hill crests on Bakhtiari border north-west to Daulatabad, thence to Kasri-i-Shirin as in former alternative.

The first line including Ispahan would be easier to hold on account of better desert frontier obtained north of Ispahan. For administrative purposes it is desirable that line of partition should follow as far as possible existing provincial boundaries. It will be noticed that we propose to bring eastern starting point of line from Zulfikar southward to the north boundary of Kain. The inclusion of Zulfikar would make our frontier a salient equidistant between Russian bases of Kushk and Meshed, and consequently our military position at Zulfikar would be precarious. It would be objected that by abandoning Zulfikar we leave Russia coterminous with Herat border west as well as north, but to all practical purposes she is so already, and military considerations appear paramount.

No. 4.

From Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 8th May 1915.

(Extract.)

Please let me have your views on paragraphs of Russian Memorandum relating to Persia, copy sent by mail of 6th instant.

No. 5.

From Viceroy, 12th June 1915.

Reference to concluding sentence of your telegram of the 8th ultimo. Russian Memorandum relating to Persia. Speaking generally, we cannot help thinking that proposed great concessions to Russia in Constantinople and the Straits are by no means balanced by any advantage to us which we can discern in these proposals, and we regard with concern the omission of Mesopotamia, which apart from its own special importance certainly cannot be divorced strategically from Persian question. We think that this opportunity should be taken to define our claims in that region, particularly as the reference to sacred places, as it stands, might be held to exclude us from some portions of Euphrates Valley and in any case to restrict our freedom of action.

As regards actual Persian proposals—(1) For reasons explained in my telegram of 19th April, we recommend concession to Russia of the portion of Zulfikar salient that lies outside province of Kain. (2) As regards Ispahan and Yazd, we consider that, for strategic reasons stated in our telegram of 19th April, it is desirable that both these places should be definitely included in our sphere together with natural features to the north-east, north, and north-west of these localities. Further, without Yazd and Ispahan our commercial position in Southern Persia will not be materially improved, while politically it is obviously undesirable that we should have on the borders of our zone two large and important centres of Russian influence, which might become foci of intrigue. Moreover, Bakhtiari interests are intimately bound up with Ispahan. Our claim to Ispahan and Yazd should be balanced against our concession at Zulfikar, but if it is impossible to obtain both, we should prefer to insist upon the relinquishment by Russia of Ispahan, because it controls the Bakhtiari country, tribes, and interests, has the shorter and better line of communication with our base on the sea, is the terminus of the Lynch road, is better placed for

securing our Mesopotamian and oil interests against pressure from the east, and would enable us to operate with better effect against any advance southward from the Caspian.

As regards railway questions, we would suggest inclusion of paragraph reserving to ourselves right of veto on any project of strategical importance, and in any case right to have majority, including military representative, on board of control on all railways outside Russian sphere.

As regards Russia's demands for liberty of action in her own sphere, we realise that while this would be difficult to combat, it means eventual complete Russification of Northern Persia, and eventual establishment of Russian province coterminous with our sphere. The fact that the capital of Persia would be within this province makes this development even more undesirable. Were it possible, we should infinitely prefer a self-denying ordinance on both sides limiting the introduction of troops and amount of administrative interference in our respective spheres. This alone would make revival of Persia possible. Failing this, however, we should insist upon similar freedom of action in British sphere if we should in future find such a course necessary.

Finally, we are of opinion that the moment has come to impress upon Russian Government that a change in their attitude towards British interests in Asia is very desirable; and that while India, standing side by side with Great Britain and her Colonies, is supporting the Franco-Russian Alliance in five theatres of war to the very utmost of her strength and resources, and is even assisting to obtain Russian predominance in Constantinople and the Dardanelles, she has the right to expect Indian interests in Asia to be fairly and even generously treated, and without creating needless difficulties in Afghanistan, Tibet, and elsewhere. For it can only be upon a basis of equity and confidence, with a due regard to neutral interests of each, that the future peace of Asia can be securely maintained and controlled by British and Russian Governments.

APPENDIX B.

TELEGRAMS RELATING TO TIBET AND AFGHANISTAN.

No. 1.

From Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 8th May 1915.

(Extract.)

Among Russian desiderata in connection with eventual peace negotiations is one to effect that questions affecting Northern Afghanistan should be solved in accordance with their wishes expressed last year in connection with Tibet. Foreign Office ask for my views and suggest that, in view of persistent refusal of Chinese to sign Convention, Russian acceptance of it is no longer worth purchasing at the price proposed. Please telegraph your views. Presumably Japanese action in China does not make it easier for us to disinterest ourselves in Tibet, and may be a point which we can use in our favour with Russia. Quite apart from Tibetan negotiations it may be expected that after war Russians will revive Oxus irrigation scheme, see my telegram dated 9th June 1914, and repeat complaints about Hari Rud and Murghab.

No. 2.

From Viceroy, 13th May 1915.

Your telegram dated 8th May. Russian desiderata. Our interests in Tibet are for the time being safeguarded by Anglo-Tibetan Declaration, and there appears no prospect of China signing Convention in near future. I therefore strongly deprecate any concession whatever to Russia as price of her prospective consent to Convention on the chance of its eventually being signed by China. Apart from this, if Amir maintains his present attitude in face of strong counter influences, we shall be under considerable obligations to him at end of war, as also will Russia. Any Anglo-Russian Declaration immediately after war regarding Northern Afghanistan could only result in arousing liveliest suspicions in Afghanistan, where public opinion is already considerably exercised by our alliance with Russia. Such Declaration, however harmless, would be regarded as act of perfidy and menace to integrity of Afghanistan and inevitably estrange Amir. Further, as a matter of actual fact, it must be obvious to Russia that we have no intention or prospect of doing anything in Northern Afghanistan in regard to irrigation, railways, &c., when we cannot even in Southern Afghanistan construct the railways or telegraphs which we desire to. At the same time we are quite prepared, after the conclusion of war, to attempt to induce the Amir, if necessary by means of a mission, to remove such commercial and other inconveniences as Russia has reason to complain of at present, and generally to improve Russo-Afghan relations on the northern frontier.

As regards Oxus irrigation scheme we must adhere to views expressed in our telegram of 22nd July 1914, that Russian Government should fully explain necessity for choosing Afghan territory for construction of proposed works before subject can be again considered.

No. 3.

From Secretary of State for India to Viceroy, 17th May 1915.

Your telegram of 13th May. Russian argument in any case in which we may wish to avail ourselves of Anglo-Tibetan Declaration will be that it is invalid so far as it conflicts with Anglo-Russian Convention, and they will refuse to amend latter except in return for *quid pro quo* in Afghanistan. How do you meet this argument?

With the rest of paragraph 1 I agree. As regards paragraph 2, I am sending by Political Secretary's letter of 14th May draft of a formula which might if necessary be proposed to Russian Government. Please telegraph your views on it.

From Viceroy, 10th June 1915.

Reference concluding sentence of your telegram of 17th ultimo. Russian desiderata in Afghanistan. We see no objection to draft formula forwarded with Political Secretary's letter dated 14th May, on the distinct understanding that it is to be kept absolutely secret until some time after the conclusion of the war. If the Amir were given reason to think now that we were arranging with Russia to interfere as soon as the war was over with internal irrigation arrangements in Afghanistan his liveliest suspicions would be aroused, and it is quite possible that this might induce him to give way to surrounding influences and abandon his attitude of neutrality. Delicacy of Afghan situation cannot be over-rated, and we most earnestly deprecate anything likely to upset the equilibrium.

As regards formula itself, wording appears suitable, but fact must be faced that Amir is not at all likely at any time to agree to Commission, or should he do so to surrender even the smallest of his rights except possibly for very ample compensation. In order, however, to silence Russian demands for the present, we agree proposed formula might be used on condition of its secrecy as above explained.

APPENDIX C.

DRAFT FORMULA RELATING TO AFGHANISTAN.

1. *As accepted by Government of India in Viceroy's telegram of 10th June 1915.*

His Majesty's Government taking note of the declaration of the Russian Government that it has no political interest in Afghanistan, and recognising that its desires with regard to the conservation and utilisation of the water supply of the rivers of northern Afghanistan have reference solely to the economic development of its own territories limitrophe with those of the Amir, will be willing after the conclusion of the war to use its good offices to induce the Government of Afghanistan to agree to the appointment of a technical Commission,* on which the three Governments shall be represented, to ascertain the hydrographic conditions and irrigational needs of these limitrophe regions, and to report as to what measures might be taken by the Governments of Russia and Afghanistan severally in their respective territories, in mutual agreement, for the better control, distribution and augmentation of the waters of the Oxus, the Hari Rud, the Murghab and their tributaries. In their investigations and suggestions the Commission shall be debarred from questioning any rights of the Afghan Government and its subjects in the water supply of these rivers that were recognised by the Boundary Commission. Neither the Russian nor the Afghan Government shall be under any obligation to give effect to the suggestions of the Commission, and any undertaking founded thereon shall be the result of the mutual good-will and free agreement of the two Governments.

2. *Showing amendments† proposed in Part III. of foregoing note.*

His Majesty's Government taking note of the declaration of the Russian Government that it has no political interest in Afghanistan, and recognising that its desires with regard to the conservation and utilisation of the water supply of the ~~rivers in Northern Afghanistan~~ *Oxus, the Hari Rud, the Murghab and their tributaries* have reference solely to the economic development of its own territories limitrophe with those of the Amir, and *having themselves no interest in irrigation projects on the rivers in question*, will be willing after the conclusion of the war to use its good offices to induce the Government of Afghanistan to agree to the appointment of a technical Commission, on which the three Governments shall be represented, to ascertain the hydrographic conditions and irrigational needs of these limitrophe regions, and to report as to what measures might be taken by the Governments of Russia and Afghanistan severally in their respective territories, in mutual agreement, for the better control, distribution and augmentation of the waters of the ~~Oxus, the Hari Rud, the Murghab and their tributaries~~ *above-mentioned rivers*. In their investigations and suggestions the Commission shall be debarred from questioning any rights of the Afghan Government and its subjects in the water supply of these rivers that were recognised by the Boundary Commission. Neither the Russian nor the Afghan Government shall be under any obligation to give effect to the suggestions of the Commission, and any undertaking founded thereon shall be the result of the mutual good-will and free agreement of the two Governments.

* A precedent for such a Commission is afforded by that appointed in 1893 in the following circumstances:—"Complaints having been made by the Russian Government in 1891 and 1892 about the irrigation by the Afghans of lands on the left bank of the Kushk, by canals taken off from that stream, in contravention of the Afghan Boundary Commission Protocol of the 22nd July 1887, the Government of India addressed the Amir of Afghanistan in the matter. He denied having authorised his subjects to depart in any way from the terms of the protocol of 1887, and suggested that a joint enquiry should be held on the spot by a British officer and a Russian and an Afghan representative, with a view to ascertain which side had perpetrated a breach of the agreement. The British Government thereupon addressed the Russian Government, proposing a joint enquiry on the spot by a Russian and Afghan representative and a British officer. The Russian Government agreed to the proposal on the condition that immediate effect should be given to the award in the presence of the Commissioners." (Aitchison's "Treaties, &c.," 1909 Edition, Vol. XI, pp. 329-330.)

† New passages are printed in italics.

APPENDIX D.

IRRIGATION RIGHTS ON RUSSO-AFGHAN FRONTIER.

I. Extracts from Anglo-Russian Protocol of 26th December 1885 (N.S.) :—

(i.) The Russian Commissioner gave his adhesion to this arrangement [*i.e.* boundary line in neighbourhood of Chihil Dukhteran] on condition that it should come into force at the same time that it might be agreed that Russia (1) has the right, if she thinks proper, to construct a dam across the Murghab at the place chosen by her below the head of the Bund-i-Nadir canal; and (2) shall receive in that case, on the right bank of the Murghab, a piece of land which shall be agreed upon as being sufficient for carrying out the work.

(ii.) The question of the irrigation of the Kushk and Kashan valley was raised by M. Lessar. . . . After the discussion which ensued, it was agreed that in the two above-mentioned sections [*viz.*, Kushk valley between Chihil Dukhteran and Kara Tappa Khurd, and Kashan valley between Torsekh and dam below Robat-i-Kashan] the Afghans should not have the right to increase the number or extent of the canals in actual use; but as regards the above-named canals [*i.e.*, apparently, the Kashan and Bund-i-Nadir canals] that, provided that condition was observed, they should retain the use and absolute control of them without interference.

(iii.) It was further agreed that the want of water, no matter from what cause it arose, in the canals which flow into Russian territory, but of which the heads are in Afghan territory, shall not justify claims on the part of Russia.

II.—Extracts from Anglo-Russian Protocol of 22nd July 1887 (N.S.)* :—

Clause 3.—The clause in the Protocol of the 26th December 1885, prohibiting the Afghans from making use of the irrigating canals in the Kushk Valley below Chihil Dukhteran which were not in use at that time, remains in force, but it is understood that this clause can only be applied to the canals supplied by the Kushk. The Afghans shall not have the right to make use of the waters of the Kushk for their agricultural works north of Chihil Dukhteran; but the waters of the Moghur belong exclusively to them, and they may carry out any works they may think necessary in order to make use of them.

Clause 4.—The clauses in the Protocols of the 26th December 1885, and of the 13th September 1886,† relative to the construction of a dam on the Murghab, remain in force. M. Zinoview having expressed the wish that the obligation imposed on the Amir of Afghanistan to give up for this purpose a tract of land on the right bank of the Murghab under the conditions stipulated in the said protocols, should be extended to the whole course of the river below the canal-head of Yaki-Yuz, Colonel Ridgeway is of opinion that the necessary steps to obtain the assent of the Amir might delay the conclusion of the present arrangement; but he is nevertheless convinced that the assent of the Amir to the cession, under the same conditions, of a tract of land on the right bank can be obtained without difficulty, if later on the Imperial Government should inform Her Britannic Majesty's Government of their intention of proceeding to the construction of a dam above the canal-head of Bund-i-Nadir.

* The Protocol of 22nd July 1887 embodied the final agreement between the British and Russian Commissioners for the delimitation of the Russo-Afghan Frontier.

† The protocol of 13th September 1886 merely fixed the limits of the "piece of land" referred to in extract (i) from the protocol of 26th December 1885.

III.—Extracts from Anglo-Russian Protocol of 3rd September 1893 (N.S.)* :—

Clause 3.—In order to elucidate and complete Clause 3 of the Protocol of 22nd July 1887, the Commissioners have established that the Afghans shall not be able to take off water from the river Kushk, north of the ruins of the Chihil Dukhteran bridge (Pul-i-Khishti), for irrigation by means of either new or disused or closed canals, the Afghans shall not have the right to carry on, below the parallel of Chihil Dukhteran Frontier Pillar No. 23, for irrigation, the branches of the canals which take off from the Kushk south of the ruins of the Chihil Dukhteran bridge (Pul-i-Khishti), but they shall have the right to make use of the said branches to irrigate their cultivation as far as the parallel of the Chihil Dukhteran Frontier Pillar No. 23.

The Afghans shall also have the right to the free use for irrigation or any other purpose of the waters of springs which exist on the left bank of the Kushk between the hills and the river to the south of the Karatappa Frontier Pillar No. 22, up to the points where the springs reach the stream of the river.

To the south of the ruins of Chihil Dukhteran bridge (Pul-i-Khisti) the Afghans have full rights to all the water of the Kushk, and shall not be subject to any restriction whatever.

Clause 4.—The want of water in the Kushk, no matter from whatever cause arising, provided that the Afghans maintain the stipulations of Clause 3 of the Protocol of 22nd July 1887, and the arrangements above set forth, cannot give cause for further claims on the part of the Russian authorities.

* This protocol was drawn up by a Commission appointed "to enquire into on the spot" and settle the question of the alleged infractions, which may have been committed by either "side, of the stipulations relating to the waters of the Kushk," as contained in the Protocol of the 22nd July 1887. (See footnote on page 18 for the circumstances which led to the appointment of this Commission.)

P 2163 Put away with ~~2696~~ 14
15

Brown-

U. S. of S.
I.O.

23 June 1915

From S. of S.	23 rd March	(1145)
To ---	24 th "	(1173)
From ---	19 th Apr.	(1500)
To ---	8 th May	(1666)
From ---	13 th "	(1774)
To ---	17 th " (with dft. formula)	(1774)
From ---	10 th June	(2138)
" ---	12 th "	(2163)

I am directed by the S. of S. for I. to forward, for the information of the S. of S. for I.A., copy of the telegrams noted in the margin relating to the desiderata of the Russian Govt in Persia & Afghanistan as stated in Count Benckendorff's memorandum of 22nd March last, copy of which was enclosed in your letter No 34054 of 30th Apr.

Mr Chamberlain would suggest, in view of the magnitude of the issues involved, that the whole question shd. be referred to the interdepartmental C^o presided over by Sir M. de Bunsen, or some similarly constituted body, for examination & report.

(sd) T. W. Holderness.

S. of S.
sign?
T. W. H.
22/6

App'd as
22/6

Copy to India
25 JUN 1915

W. Chamberlain. Our Disiderata in Asiatic Turkey has just been (56)
examined by Sir Maurice de Bunsen's Committee, of which I was
a member. Our report is ready and should shortly be in the
hands of the Cabinet.

The F. O. might usefully appoint a similar Committee
to examine our Disiderata as regards Persia & Afghanistan.
We might suggest ^{the} sending on the G. of I.'s telegram. In that
case it might not be necessary to go into details in our
letter. But I would let the F. O. ~~have~~ &
the Committee hear Sir A. Hietzel's note
after revision by him. 21/6/15 J. W. H.

W. S. of S.

I agree
AC

P2163
15.

22/6
2696/14

I do not submit a draft at
the present stage. The last page of the
minute, if approved, can easily be made
into one.

We have no good map of Persia
showing the provincial boundaries. On the
little one attached, the present lines are
shown in blue, & the line wh. the G. of I.
want is shown in red pencil.

The G. of I. say that it is desirable that
the line shd. as far as possible follow provincial
boundaries, but their's seems to deviate from
them a good deal.

W. H.

21/6/15



Put away with

Index map to
 Gazetteer of Persia

Register No.
2163

✓
Put away with 2696
14

Secret Department.

Telegram
Letter from *Vice, of*

Dated *12* } *June* 1915.
Rec. *14* }

Formally acknowledged _____

	Date.	Initials.	SUBJECT.
Under Secretary.....	<i>21 June</i>	<i>AA</i>	<i>The War.</i>
Secretary of State.....	<i>see separate sheets</i>		<i>As to settlement with Russia & revision of Anglo-Russian Agreement</i>
Committee			
Under Secretary.....			
Secretary of State.....			

Copy to

FOR USE BY DEPARTMENTS ONLY.

Submitted for instructions

Previous Papers :—

map B39
Index map from Russia together
1500

Li J. Alderson

2163

Whenever I & you can get a little leisure, I should like to have a talk with you & Sir A. H. H. on this subject with a map before us. etc

From Viceroy, 12th June 1915.

Foreign Secret. Reference to concluding sentence of your telegram of the 8th ultimo. Russian Memorandum relating to Persia. Speaking generally, we cannot help thinking that proposed great concessions to Russia in Constantinople and the Straits are by no means balanced by any advantage to us which we can discern in these proposals, and we regard with concern the omission of Mesopotamia, which apart from its own special importance certainly cannot be divorced strategically from Persian question. We think that this opportunity ~~cannot~~ be taken to define our claims in that region, particularly as the reference to sacred places, as it stands, might be held to exclude us from some portions of Euphrates Valley and in any case to restrict our freedom of action.

As regards actual Persian proposal--(1) For reasons explained in my telegram of 19th April, we recommend concession to Russia of the portion of Zulfikar salient that lies outside province of Kain. (2) As regards Ispahan and Yazd, we consider that for strategic reasons stated in our telegram of 19th April, it is desirable that both these places should be definitely included in our sphere together with natural features to the north-east, north, and north-west of these localities. Further without Yazd and Ispahan our commercial position in Southern Persia will not be materially improved, while politically it is obviously undesirable that we should have on the borders of our zone two large and important centres of Russian influence, which might become foci of intrigue. Moreover, Bakhtiari interests are intimately bound up with Ispahan. Our claim to Ispahan and Yazd should be balanced against our concession at Zulfikar, but if it is impossible to obtain both, we should prefer to insist upon the relinquishment by Russia of Ispahan, because it controls the Bakhtiari country, tribes, and interests, has the shorter and better line of communication with our base on the sea, is the terminus of the Lynch road, is better placed for securing our Mesopotamian and oil interests against pressure from the east, and would enable us to operate with better effect against any advance southward from the Caspian.

As regards railway questions, we would suggest inclusion of paragraph reserving to ourselves right of veto on any project of strategical importance, and in any case right to have majority, including military representative, on board of control on all railways outside Russian sphere.

As regards Russia's demands for liberty of action in her own sphere, we realise that while this would be difficult to combat, it means eventual complete Russification of Northern Persia, and eventual establishment of Russian province coterminous with our sphere. The fact that the capital of Persia would be within this province makes this development even more undesirable. Were it possible, we should infinitely prefer a self-denying ordinance on both sides limiting the introduction of troops and amount of administrative interference in our respective spheres. This alone would make revival of Persia possible. Failing this, however, we should insist upon similar freedom of action in British sphere if we should in future find such a course necessary.

Finally, we are of opinion that the moment has come to impress upon Russian Government that a change in their attitude towards British interests in Asia is very desirable; and that while India, standing side by side with Great Britain and her Colonies is supporting the Franco-Russian Alliance in five theatres of war to the very utmost of her strength and resources, and is even assisting to obtain Russian predominance in Constantinople and the Dardanelles, she has the right to expect Indian interests in Asia to be fairly and even generously treated, and without creating needless difficulties in Afghanistan, Tibet and elsewhere. For it can only be upon a basis of equity and confidence with a due regard to neutral interests of each, that the future peace of Asia can be securely maintained and controlled by British and Russian Governments.

I entirely agree & consider that this view should be pressed as strongly as possible on the F. O.

We ought to get a very real & large guide to our help in Asia for

Constantinople & comments where we are

the same as holding to Russia - F. O. always

too much & please

a little & asks

We want of the there! a Dutchman etc

Am

(59)

*From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department,
8th May 1915.*

Foreign Secret. Among Russian desiderata in connection with eventual peace negotiations is one to effect that questions affecting Northern Afghanistan should be solved in accordance with their wishes expressed last year in connection with Tibet. Foreign Office ask for my views and suggest that in view of persistent refusal of Chinese to sign Convention Russian acceptance of it is no longer worth purchasing at the price proposed. Please telegraph your views. Presumably Japanese action in China does not make it easier for us to disinterest ourselves in Tibet, and may be a point which we can use in our favour with Russia. Quite apart from Tibetan negotiations it may be expected that after war Russians will revive Oxus irrigation scheme, see my telegram dated 9th June 1914, and repeat complaints about Harirud and Murghab.

Please also let me have your views on paragraphs of Russian memorandum relating to Persia, copy sent by mail of 6th instant.

DRAFT TELEGRAM.

SECRETARY OF STATE

TO

VICEROY, FOREIGN DEPARTMENT.

(Retamilla)

Despatched 30 August 1915.

Jm.

(p.7)

1500/15-

X

Foreign secret. Persia. Please send
map showing provincial boundaries
required for your telⁿ 19th Apr.

(1500/15)

Send

at

30/8

P 1500/15-

Put by at 4/9

From Viceroy, 3rd September 1915.

Foreign Secret. Persia. Your telegram of the 30th ultimo. Maps
showing provincial boundaries will be sent by this mail.



Register No.
1500

Put away with **2696**
14
Secret Department.

Minute Paper.

Telegram from Viceroy

Dated 19 } April 1915
Rec. 20 }

	Date.	Initials.	SUBJECT.
Under Secretary.....			<u>Anglo-Turkish war.</u>
Secretary of State.....			
Committee			
Under Secretary.....			
Secretary of State.....			

Copy to Jo. 23 June
(see 2163)

FOR INFORMATION.

Circulated with
1748/15
and 2163/15

Previous Papers :—

1173
1145

CSM

(62)

*From Secretary of State to Viceroy, Foreign Department,
29th March 1915.*

Foreign Secret. Bakhtiariis. Cox's telegram of 17th March 562 B, to Foreign Office, paragraph 3. His Majesty's Government agree that in event of dissolution of Persia local autonomy of Khans should be guaranteed, but desire that area to be included in guarantee should be exactly defined. His Majesty's Minister and Consuls will be instructed to consider and report as soon as possible. Please telegraph your views. Line proposed in penultimate paragraph of your telegram of 23rd March seems to cut Bakhtiari in two. In any eventual partition or readjustment of spheres Bakhtiari should if possible, be entirely in our sphere. Any new demarcation line should not be mere line on map but should follow easily recognisable natural features such as watersheds. Please consider further in this sense, and propose two lines one including, the other excluding, Ispahan.

FOREIGN SECRET TELEGRAMS

Secret Department.

From Viceroy, 19th April 1915.

Foreign Secret. Reference to latter portion of your telegram of the 29th March last. Partition of Persia. We wish it clearly understood that we put forward partition as an unwelcome necessity in the event of Persia forsaking her neutrality, and regard additional responsibilities entailed, vague and undefined as they are, with utmost diffidence. Partition and spheres of influence are two entirely different propositions, and we sincerely trust that former may be avoided.

Subject to these remarks, we propose following alternative lines :—

(1.) Including Ispahan. We propose as our northern limit province of Kain, southern salient of Khorasan, provinces of Yazd, Ispahan, Bakhtiari, and Luristan. In this case our strategic requirements are hills surrounding Kain, Birjand, and extending to Afghan border, high headland around Naiband, hills north and north-east of Yazd, commanding roads from Meshed and Asterabad, high ground running north-westward from Nain to about Natanz, including Kashan if possible, but in any case running westward along watershed to Khunsar on border of Bakhtiari country; thence following high ground north-west to Daulatabad; thence westward to Kasri-Shirin, including Kermanshah if possible, but otherwise following natural features nearest to tribal border.

(2.) Line—excluding Ispahan. We propose as our northern limit provinces of Kain, Kirman, southern portion of Yazd including Yazd City, Fars, Bakhtiari, including Luristan. Our strategical requirements would be the same as regards Birjand, Kain, and Naiband, whence line should follow hills north of Yazd, as in former alternative, to south of Salt Lake, namely, south of Burneh Chah to Yazd-i-Khast, whence it would follow hill crests on Bakhtiari border north west to Daulatabad, thence to Kasri-Shirin as in former alternative.

The first line including Ispahan would be easier to hold on account of better desert frontier obtained north of Ispahan. For administrative purposes it is desirable that line of partition should follow as far as possible existing provincial boundaries. It will be noticed that we propose to bring eastern starting point of line from Zulfikar southward to the north boundary of Kain. The inclusion of Zulfikar would make our frontier a salient equidistant between Russian bases of Kushk and Meshed, and consequently our military position at Zulfikar would be precarious. It would be objected that by abandoning Zulfikar we leave Russia coterminous with Herat border west as well as north, but to all practical purposes she is so already, and military considerations appear paramount.

We shall reply to first part of your telegram regarding guarantees to Khans shortly.